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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

AUGUST 13, 1990

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CORRESPONDENCE

Too cool jive

To the editors:
What's truly more "laughable," that rock critics debate the worth of 2 Live Crew's work, or that TNR is now where we should turn for a proper understanding of rap music ("Too Cruel, Live" July 9 & 16)? Tell me, who's your favorite—do you like Kool Moe Dee or are you more the L.L. Cool J type?

You claim that only a professor could be foolish enough to make a cultural and historical case for 2 Live Crew. This is the Jesse Helms argument—upholding smug, self-righteous "common sense," according to which anything with ugly content ultimately has no worth. Never mind that this is the exact same argument used against *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*—and also against the type of music made by your vaunted exemplar of street transcendence, Duke Ellington.

STEVEN KURTZ
Los Angeles, California

To the editors:
Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown, Zora Neale Hurston, and countless others spent their lives trying to invalidate the invidious distinction between "high" and "low" in black culture, and in your editorial on 2 Live Crew you resurrect it in one fell swoop. Ellington and Ellison are high culture; rap music is low. I suppose Hughes and Brown, who made poetry out of "street" language, would also be low culture, not to mention those other purveyors of "street" language, Richard Wright, Sonia Sanchez, Quincy Troupe, etc.

Unlike white American literature, where God forbid that a poet should incorporate lyrics from a honky-tonk song, black literature has always felt comfortable with its borrowings from "the street," and this is in large part why black American music, poetry, fiction, and art has survived—against amazing odds—as an intellectually honest and passionate body of work.

YUVAL TAYLOR
Brooklyn, New York

Dangerous liaisons

To the editors:
In your July 23 Notebook, you dredged up an old and discredited story that first appeared in the August 10, 1987, edition of *U.S. News & World Report*.

Your item alleges that we withheld important information from the Iran-contra committees about a "briefing" with Robert McFarlane, which you claim dealt with "illegal efforts to raise funds for contras from third country sources." Those allegations are patently untrue, unwarranted, and unsupported. They are in fact refuted by publicly available information, which your publication could and should have known about.

At no time during the March 4, 1985, meeting, nor at any other time for that matter, were we briefed by McFarlane, or any other administration official, about any alleged illegal contra aid activities. The essential purpose of that meeting was to discuss legislative strategy for the upcoming committee markup and subsequent House floor action on an annual intelligence authorization bill that we fully anticipated would initially contain restrictions on aid to the contras.

The absence of any conspiratorial revelation of "illegal" activity is obvious from the declassified memorandum reporting on the meeting that McFarlane subsequently sent to Max Friedersdorf of the White House staff. Moreover, that memorandum, as well as Colonel North's notes and other related documents, were widely circulated throughout the staff of the Iran-contra committees.

In addition, the leadership of the select committees knew of this information, as did some other committee members. Indeed, some of these very declassified documents were included in the appendices to the Iran-contra committee's voluminous report. What is more, they were included without objection from any of us. The only mention at all at the meeting of third country aid to the contras, which TNR incorrectly characterized as "illegal," that we can recall was the feeling expressed by Mr. Hyde that such third country support should be examined.

Therefore, to recklessly charge that we were "briefed" on "illegal" activities and that we withheld information on that particular meeting from the Iran-contra committees is to publish an egregious falsehood that is far below a minimum standard of editorial responsibility. You should have known better.

BOB LIVINGSTON, HENRY J. HYDE,
BOB STUMP, BILL MCCOLLUM
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

The editors reply:
Some Republican partisans contend that even though the president had affixed his signature to the Boland Amendment, which barred military aid to the Nicaraguan contras by the United States or any of its agencies, it was not a law the administration was obliged to follow. According to this view, it was perfectly permissible for representatives of the U.S. govern-

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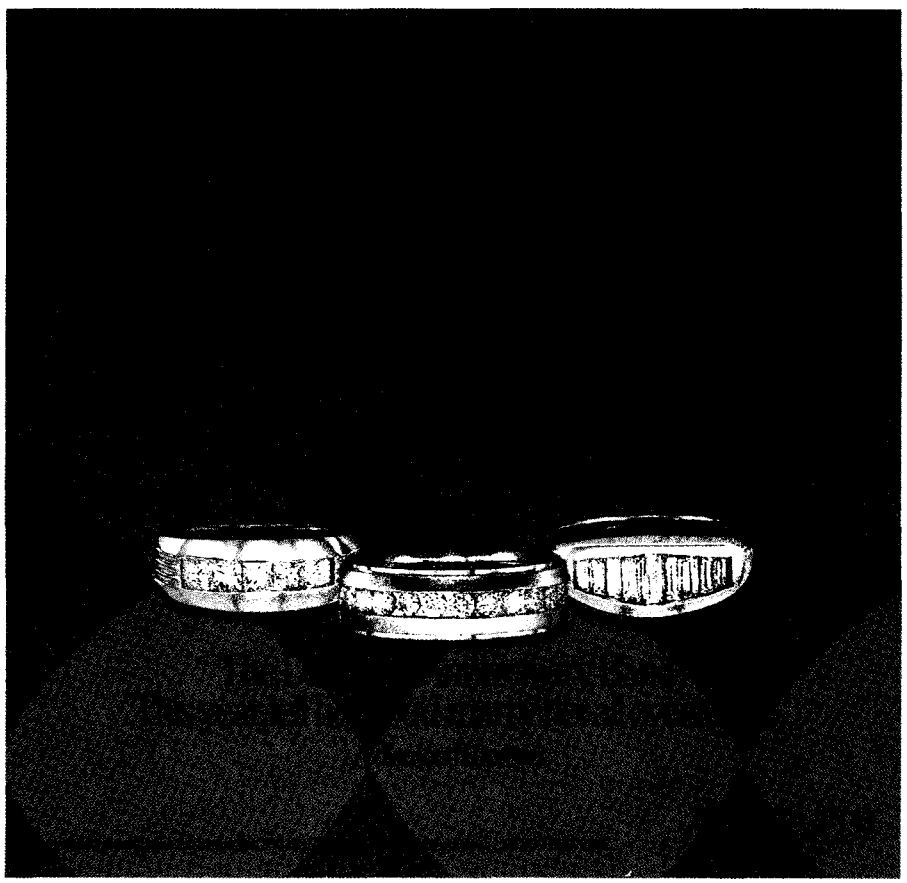

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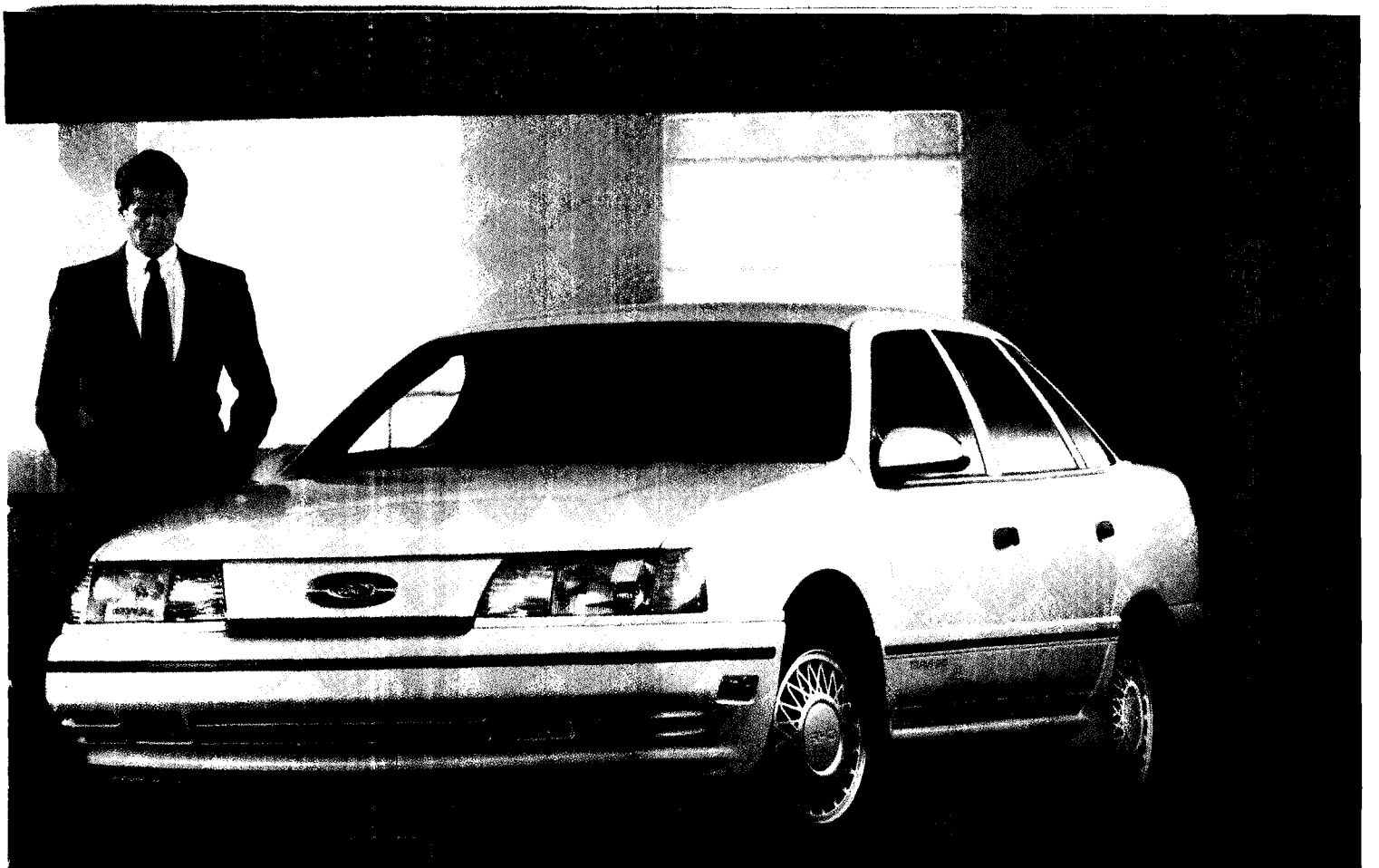

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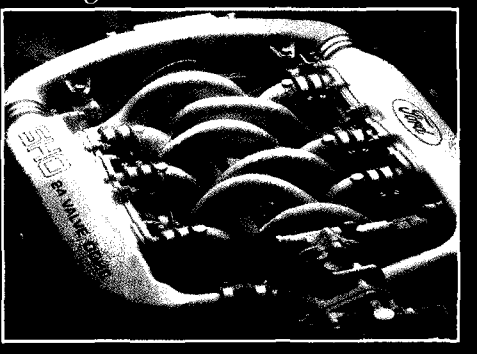

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TRB FROM WASHINGTON

Here we go again

President Bush is either a liar or a fool when he says he has no idea where David Souter stands on abortion, affirmative action, and the other hot constitutional issues. Seeking a formula that will reassure liberals without alarming conservatives, and vice versa, he said there was no "litmus test," but that his Supreme Court nominee would "interpret the Constitution and not legislate." And thus the Summer Supreme Court Hypocrisy Festival is under way once more. All the players know their parts, but the audience may need help understanding the script. Herewith a handy guide to some of the major buzzwords.

Advice and consent. A "strict construction" (see below) of these words would seem to entitle the Senate to a major say in choosing Supreme Court justices. The "original intent" (see below) of the Constitution's authors apparently was to compromise between different proposals giving exclusive authority to the Senate and to the president. Yet conservatives generally interpret this phrase to mean that the Senate must approve anyone the president nominates unless he actually can't tie his shoes on the third attempt.

A Supreme Court justice is not a member of the president's team, like a Cabinet officer, and the Senate owes the president's choice no special deference. This is not a recipe for paralysis, as some have charged. It is a recipe for compromise. Clearly Strict Constructionist Bush made no serious attempt to seek the Senate's "advice" before choosing Souter. That should make its "consent" harder to come by.

Balance. What liberals now claim they want among the nine justices. History does not record any liberal calls for "balance" when the Court was tilted to the left and liberal presidents were doing the appointing.

Conservative. This can mean two things. It can mean a principled belief that unelected judges shouldn't thwart democracy by sticking their own political values into the Constitution. Or it can mean, "Here is a golden opportunity to stick conservative political values into the Constitution. Liberals did it for years—why shouldn't we?" (See "judicial restraint," below.) Liberals like to argue that "conservative" also should mean a reluctance to overturn established precedents. But conservatives are not stupid enough to fall for that.

Election returns. Commentators seem unable to resist Mr. Dooley's hackneyed line, "th' supreme coort follows th'iliction returns"—even though the entire controversy over the Court centers on the fact that it does *not* follow the election returns. Conservatives resent this. However, when liberals choose to mount a campaign against a nominee, conservatives complain about the "politicization" of the judiciary. They've got it backward. The Supreme Court is *supposed* to be above politics—protecting our constitutional rights against the whims of the majority. Choosing justices, by contrast, is where politics is *supposed* to come into it.

Fifth Amendment. A perfect example, say conservatives, of a provision the liberals have run wild with, allowing criminals to get off on technicalities. Deplorable, unless the criminal happens to be Oliver North. The North prosecution just got trashed on an exquisite Fifth Amendment technicality by a conservative-tilted federal appeals court panel.

Ideology. Very bad for a judge to have, everyone agrees. (But see "philosophy," below.) In announcing Souter, Bush reaffirmed the traditional pretense that he sought "excellence" and that he would never dream of finding out whether a potential justice agreed with him on issues he has long claimed to be vitally important. In fact, judicial selections have become much more ideological. The chance of a Republican president choosing another Brennan, as Eisenhower did, is nil. Fair enough. But this gives the Senate the right to pass judgment on the same basis.

Judicial activism and **judicial restraint.** Conservatives believe that activism is bad and restraint is good. Except that the 1988 Republican platform calls for judges who hold that "the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children," which means judges who ban abortion no matter what the legislature votes. Oh yes, and conservatives think the Special Prosecutor law is unconstitutional, and so is affirmative action, and maybe New York City rent control, and so on and so forth.

Litmus tests. Sometimes called "single-issue litmus tests." Bad, very bad. Especially the other side's. While pro-choice senators were warning President Bush not to apply a pro-life "litmus test" to his nominee, pro-choice groups were sending out mass mailings promising to oppose anyone who would vote to reverse *Roe* v. *Wade*.

Philosophy. A good thing to have, as long as it doesn't make you an "ideologue" (see above) or suggest that you have "prejudged" anything (see below). There is the germ of a legitimate distinction here, between having a theory of the role of the judiciary (philosophy) and merely being determined to impose your political will (ideology). But usually a "philosophy" is what I have and an "ideology" is what you have.

Original intent. What conservatives say they want judges to follow. Makes it sound simple, which it isn't. What was the original intent of the Framers about how to interpret their original intent?

Prejudge. A very, very bad thing to do, it seems. Preferable: an "open mind." In the Bork episode, Republicans savaged Democrats for having "prejudged" his suitability before the hearings (as if the Republicans hadn't). Then Democrats savaged Bork for having "prejudged" constitutional issues that might come before him on the Court.

The Supreme Court is not a trial court, in which factual evidence must be presented afresh. The whole point of having a judicial "philosophy"—good, remember?—is that it leads you to understandings on specific issues. Abortion, for example, has been the predominant constitutional issue for almost two decades. Anyone who hasn't thought it through and reached a conclusion by now shouldn't be eligible to graduate law school, let alone sit on the Supreme Court. Which leads directly to . . .

Questions on specific issues. Should a Supreme Court nominee have to answer them? Of course. Except for Bush's understandable desire to have it both ways, why should this be a guessing game? That would indeed—as Robert Bork has charged—put a premium on candidates with no record of having thought about the issues they will have to deal with. Nominees shouldn't be expected to answer an endless string of hypothetical questions. But on the great constitutional questions—does the Bill of Rights apply to the states?—and on the big 5-4 issues of recent years—abortion, reverse discrimination, flag burning—there's no reason the Senate shouldn't expect an answer and an explanation of how it was derived.

Pro-choice. "We must stop any nominee who is not pro-choice," says abortion-rights leader Kate Michelman. But you can be pro-choice and still think that abortion is not in the Constitution. Indeed, that is what I think. The reaction to last year's *Webster* decision has demonstrated that not only can the political

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

AUGUST 13, 1990

WHAT BRENNAN WROUGHT

William J. Brennan Jr. gave liberals so much more than they expected from him that it would be peevish to withhold gratitude from him. Because of Brennan and the judicial era he embodied, scores of political battles that otherwise would have been fought in the streets and in the legislatures were settled, for better or for worse, in clean, peaceful courtrooms. Brennan, for many liberals, was too good to be true: a warmhearted, omnipotent genie who could grant their most extravagant wishes without asking anything in return.

Over the thirty-four years of Brennan's Supreme Court service THE NEW REPUBLIC often shared Brennan's politics, but sometimes took issue with his jurisprudence. His passionate judicial activism was unafraid, in a pinch, to leave constitutional text, history, and structure behind. When liberals like Brennan held sway in the courts, judicial activism often led to liberal results; now that "conservatives" are the ones ignoring legislative history and congressional intentions, Brennan's legacy makes it harder for liberals to cry foul.

Brennan's politics and his jurisprudence converged most admirably in his opinions concerning civil liberties. More than any jurist since Hugo Black, he held fast to the historically rooted vision of absolute protection for the First Amendment freedoms of conscience and expression. It was Brennan's opinion in *New York Times* v. *Sullivan* that, 160 years after the Alien and Sedition acts expired, recognized their unconstitutionality, quoting Madison's words: "The censorial power is in the people over the Government, and not in the Government over the people." How fitting that one of Brennan's last opinions, affirming that freedom of expression protects even such obnoxious modes as flag burning, is also one of his greatest.

Beyond the First Amendment Brennan's best work was in the arcane but seminal area of federal jurisdiction. Tirelessly, Brennan persuaded his colleagues to open the courts to the claims of citizens, allowing them to challenge their government and vindicate their rights. In *Baker* v. *Carr*, the opinion that Chief Justice Warren called the most important of his era, Brennan repudiated the "prudential" doctrine of "political questions" championed by Felix Frankfurter and Alexander Bickel (both editors of THE NEW REPUBLIC), which had squeamishly counseled judges to sidestep decisions that might embarrass the courts or the political branches.

If Brennan's legacy is laudable in civil liberties, his enthusiasm for civil rights sometimes led him to preempt fights that should have been fought politically. In 1973, as the debate over the Equal Rights Amendment raged, Brennan convinced three of his colleagues to circumvent the amendment procedure entirely, holding, as the amendment would have held, that gender discrimination, like race discrimination, was "inherently suspect" and should be subject to "strict" judicial scrutiny. Three years later Brennan won a fifth vote by trimming his sails: gender was "semi-suspect" and should be subject to "intermediate" judicial scrutiny. Brennan's final position, we think, was sensible in light of constitutional history. But his rush to apply his views deflated the ERA, the opponents of which ultimately prevailed; they were able to argue alternately that the amendment was pernicious and that it was superfluous.

Even the most determined opponent of capital punishment, similarly, might balk at Brennan's efforts to strike it down as unconstitutional. The Constitution, after all, implicitly permits the death penalty (no person can be "twice put in jeopardy of life and limb, nor be deprived of life . . . without due process of law"). And the people, unfortunately but overwhelmingly, support it. Brennan briefly persuaded his colleagues to outlaw the death penalty as "cruel and unusual," but he soon lost his majority. Brennan was right to conclude that this grisly and demeaning method of punishment "does not comport with human dignity"; he was wrong, alas, to conclude that it therefore does not comport with the Constitution.

Brennan's other views in criminal procedure seemed

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to become more unreasonable with the passage of time. In 1966 he properly held that taking a blood sample from a suspect was not the kind of self-incrimination that the Fifth Amendment forbids. But in the 1970s and '80s, his rhetoric became increasingly strident, and his dissents strained to hold against the government at every turn. He would have read the exclusionary rule to exclude even fairly obtained evidence. And his efforts to extend the right to counsel to the earliest stages of police investigations would have made interviews with suspects all but impossible.

Brennan's favorite opinion, *Goldberg* v. *Kelly*, said that New York could not cut off welfare payments without a hearing. Citing Charles Reich, Brennan held that welfare, once granted, could only be denied by due process of law. But Brennan sought to expand the analogy further than logic or his colleagues would permit, arguing that schools should not be permitted to fire teachers, or cities to fire policemen, without a full-blown judicial hearing. To him we owe at least some of the litigiousness of our society.

Brennan also overreached in affirmative action. In the *Bakke* case, over Brennan's objection, Justice Powell struck down university admissions programs that set aside places for minorities alone. But in a long series of majority opinions Brennan had his revenge, upholding quotas and permitting court-ordered and legislative programs as well as voluntary ones. In the last opinion he wrote for the Court, Brennan upheld an FCC plan to set aside discounted television licenses for minority businesses, not as a remedy for past discrimination, but because of the expected future benefits of "programming diversity." This is reverse discrimination of the most egregious kind, a quota program that awards a windfall to the richest blacks, who need it least.

And then there is abortion. Although Brennan did not write *Roe* v. *Wade*, he was one of its last judicial supporters. THE NEW REPUBLIC has always believed, as a matter of public policy, in a woman's freedom to choose or reject an abortion, but has disagreed with Brennan and *Roe* that this freedom is enshrined in the Constitution. (Not every right, after all, is a constitutional right.) But liberals shouldn't overestimate the importance of *Roe*. Even if *Roe* is overturned, some constitutional protection for abortion may remain: seven out of eight justices say they recognize a woman's "liberty interests," which might prevent a state from prohibiting abortions entirely. And even if judicial restraints on legislatures are removed, the pro-choice movement has proved its ability to win abortion rights politically rather than judicially.

It was typical of George Bush, who splits every difference he can't obfuscate, to choose a nominee distinguished mostly by his indistinctness. This misreads the lessons of the Robert Bork affair: Bork was defeated not because his principles were too firm but because they were too often elastic or obnoxious. David Souter seems, at first glance, to be an intelligent if narrow fellow. Perhaps, like William Brennan, he will surpass expectations.

President Bush says he has no idea where his nominee stands on (for example) abortion. That reflects a strange incuriosity about an issue that candidate Bush promised would be at the center of his deliberations on judicial appointments. Senate Democrats, in their scrutiny of Souter, are under no obligation to share this presidential incuriosity. But although they are entitled to ask Souter whether he will overturn *Roe*, they would be foolish to harp on the answer. One way or another, the appointment of a judicial conservative is inevitable.

Therefore, let the Senate take up Bush's mantra and decide for themselves whether Souter really is committed to "interpreting, not making, the law." Some self-styled "strict constructionists"—Chief Justice William Rehnquist, for instance—have a reckless tendency to misinterpret laws that protect civil rights and legislative powers by ignoring the intentions of Congress entirely. (Rehnquist said that one statute authorized President Reagan to prohibit travel to Cuba without declaring a "national emergency," even though the act was specifically passed to deny presidents that authority.) And in an age of conservative courts and a liberal Congress, judicial respect for legislative history is often the best protection for the people's liberties. Instead of fearing Souter's strict construction of the Constitution, the Senate should ask whether he will also strictly construe congressional statutes. If Souter, under the spotlight, looks to be the kind of judicial conservative who will defer to the intentions of the 102nd Congress as well as the First, then he ought to be welcomed to the Court.

With the retirement of Justice Brennan, the long period during which liberals could count on the Supreme Court to do much of their political work for them is drawing to a close. As Fred Siegel of the Institute for Advanced Study has pointed out, American liberalism during the past generation, encouraged by the unearned gifts of judicial activism, tended to retreat into slack arguments for rights unsupported by political persuasion and untempered by the discipline of democratic decision-making. Without question, the judicial monuments of the era Brennan embodied, from *Brown* v. *Board of Education* to *Miranda* to *Sullivan*, expanded the liberties of the people in ways that have come to be taken for granted. Now that era is over, and liberals will have to make their case in the arena, not the courtroom. That is a hard thing, but not a bad thing.

NOTEBOOK

THE LONGEST GUT: One of the sources of American education's woes is the poor quality of the preparation offered by many colleges of education. Instead of a solid science, math, and humanities curriculum, prospective teachers tend to get steered to fluffball versions of regular college courses, in addition to non-subjects like media and computer applications for the classroom. This unchallenging fare attracts applicants who register

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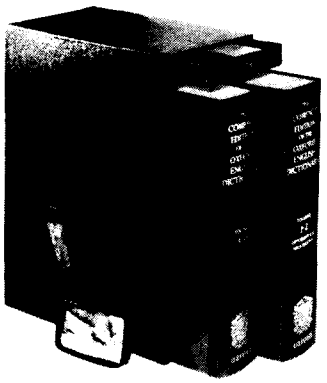

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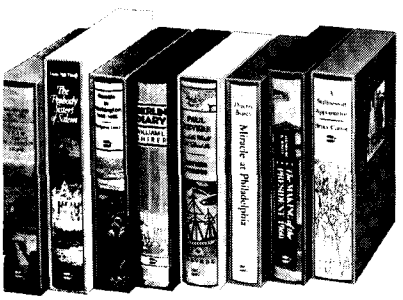

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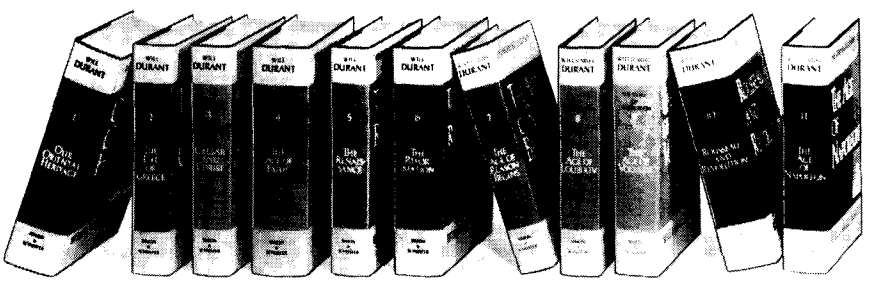

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SAT scores fifty points below the national average. Now teachers' colleges are beginning to respond to these familiar complaints. The Holmes Group, composed of education deans at ninety-eight schools, recently advocated adding a required fifth year to four-year education courses around the country. The idea, which has been endorsed by the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, is exactly what one would expect education deans to come up with: a plan to augment the empires of education deans. The question that arises is how an additional year of low-cal courses will improve matters. And the plan raises another hurdle to the many that already exist to keep talented people out of the teaching profession. The real reform in teachers' training would be to abolish the undergraduate education major altogether, and to make would-be educators learn at real four-year colleges the subjects they plan to teach. But don't expect to hear the idea from professional educationists.

WHO'S ON DRUGS? James H. Meredith, the former civil rights leader who now works for Jesse Helms, recently issued a press release on Senate stationery attacking delegates at the NAACP's 81st national convention:

> . . . I have a background profile on more than half of the delegates and over 60 percent are involved in the Drug Culture and at least 80 percent are involved in criminal or immoral activities. This is the real reason for Rev. Benjamin Hooks [sic] action. He is trying to save his own hide and that of most of the other 3,000 delegates. The only way they can stay out of jail is to apply enough political pressure to keep the government prosecutors at every level—local, state, and federal—from bringing the charges that they have proof to support against them. They are guilty as sin of every single charge being leveled against them plus many more. God knows it. I know it. The FBI knows it. The prosecutors know it. The people in the streets know it. Even much more significant, the vast majority of the people in the media know it.

The senator had this to say in response to his aide's poisonous ramblings: "Of course I have no knowledge whether these figures are right or wrong . . . I have found him in so many matters to be correct. But this is a matter between the NAACP and a well-known black man." Helms has it all figured out. Why go to the trouble of issuing lunatic, McCarthyite smears yourself when you can hire a "well-known black man" to do it for you?

SUMMER RERUN SEASON:

NEW YORK Herald Tribune LATE CITY EDITION

THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1946

Russia Backs Unification Of Germany, Stresses Its Role in World Economy

(thanks to Harry Smith and Diane Wallerstein, New York, New York)

STINGING SINGLES: Rumor has it that several members of the White House staff boycotted last week's annual office picnic at the vice president's residence after Marilyn Quayle issued a proclamation prohibiting staffers from bringing their boyfriends and girlfriends. Only spouses and children were allowed. According to junior administration officials, the reason for the rule is that Mrs. Quayle condemns dating without intent to marry, and wasn't about to watch vulgar co-mingling without benefit of wedlock on her front lawn. Sure, it may start out innocently with a chocolate malted and two straws, but before long it's Madonna concerts and leather underwear.

DEEP MONOGRAPH: The staid Council on Foreign Relations has realized that nothing sells like sex. Its newest volume is luridly titled *Same Bed, Different Dreams: America and Japan—Societies in Transition*. If this one sells, look forward to more of the same. Maybe: *Last Tango in Brussels: Europe and the Future of NATO*. Or *Helmut Does Hamburg: German Reunification in International Perspective*. •

South America goes ballistic.

THE BRAZILIAN BOMB

By Gary Milhollin and Gerard White

As the United States worries about missiles in the hands of Iraq and other countries in the Middle East, an egregious case of missile proliferation is taking shape in its own back yard. A group of European companies has agreed to sell Brazil the technology to build a rocket motor capable of launching an intercontinental ballistic missile. If the sale goes through, the first non-U.S. ICBM will take up residence in the Western Hemisphere, Brazil will be able to sell long-range missiles to Iraq and Libya (its leading arms clients), and international efforts to stop the spread of large missiles to developing countries will crash to a halt.

The outlines of the deal are clear. The French company Société Européenne de Propulsion (SEP) is joining forces with Volvo in Sweden, MAN in West Germany, and FN Motors in Belgium to teach Brazil how to produce the powerful Viking rocket engine, developed by France to lift satellites for the European Space Agency. Other European firms—including Saab Space, Alcatel-Kirk, Sfena, and Contraves—will supply Brazilian engineers with extensive training in on-board computers, guidance systems, and the techniques of launching

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multistage rockets. All of this assistance will enable Brazil to build accurate missiles big enough to carry nuclear warheads.

There is a simple motivation behind the deal: greed. These corporations own a majority share of Arianespace, a holding company for the European Space Agency's Ariane launch vehicle. Rocket technology is being used as a convenient sweetener to lure Brazil into hiring the Ariane for satellite launches instead of McDonnell-Douglas's Delta launcher. (McDonnell-Douglas can't make a similar offer without violating the U.S. Arms Export Control Act.)

France and the Ariane group are practiced in this sort of deal, having traded missile technology for satellite launch contracts since at least 1975. In fact, since its creation, the Ariane group has garnered more than half of the world's satellite launch market—at the expense of international security. In the mid-1970s SEP invited Indian engineers to participate in the Viking's development and later licensed India to produce the Viking at home. The French propulsion technology contributed to the development of India's intermediate-range Agni missile. Not surprisingly, India showed its gratitude by hiring the French-dominated Ariane to launch its satellites. In 1988 Arianespace booked two more Indian satellite launches. At about the same time, France offered India another powerful engine for India's newest space rocket—also a secret deal.

The agreement with Brazil shows every sign of working the same way. Brazil is now turning its largest and most successful space rocket, the Sonda IV, into an intermediate-range, nuclear-capable missile. The conversion is being handled by a research arm of the Brazilian Air Force called CTA (the Aerospace Technology Center). Besides converting the Sonda IV to a missile, CTA is also converting natural uranium into nuclear-weapon-grade material at a secret installation, according to press reports confirmed by U.S. officials. There is no reason to expect that CTA will keep Brazil's obligatory promise to restrict the European rocket technology to peaceful use. In fact, Brazil is already breaking a peaceful use pledge to West Germany. To import German nuclear equipment, Brazil promised to allow international inspectors to verify that it would not be used to make atomic bombs. Not only has Brazil refused to allow inspections, it has even shifted German-trained engineers from the civilian to the military side of its nuclear program.

Brazil is one of the world's largest arms exporters to the Third World. Its first three space rockets, the Sonda I, II, and III, were all developed into surface-to-surface missiles that Iraq, Libya, and Saudi Arabia purchased right off the production line. U.S. officials have confirmed reports that Brazil is currently trying to produce a nuclear-capable missile for Libya and Iraq. Both Libya and Iraq already make poison gas for missile warheads and want to acquire nuclear weapons. Iraq has sent a representative to look at a Brazilian missile prototype, and Libya has offered to finance Brazil's missile development program in exchange for a supply of missiles and the technology to make them.

Brazil has publicly rebuffed U.S. complaints about its cooperation with Libya and Iraq. In 1987 the Missile Technology Control Regime (Britain, Canada, France, Italy, Japan, West Germany, and the United States) agreed to restrict sales of any rocket that could carry a 500 kilogram payload a distance of more than 300 kilometers—limits the Viking clearly exceeds. Also a part of this nuclear non-proliferation treaty is an agreement not to sell the technology to produce such rockets. The Regime is the only international device for slowing missile proliferation. Although only a "gentleman's agreement" without international legal status or sanctions, it helps stigmatize such sales by providing a focus for international disapproval.

Brazil, which has publicly rejected the treaty, is exactly the kind of country the Regime's drafters had in mind when they agreed to restrict missile technology. If France and Germany sell their production technology to Brazil, the Regime will be fatally undermined. No member country will abstain from sales that other members are freely making, and ballistic missiles will spread unchecked. The Ariane group—and the governments of France, Belgium, Sweden, West Germany, Switzerland, and Denmark—all seem perfectly willing to trigger such a free-for-all.

That means the United States must act alone. If President Bush really wanted to stop the Viking deal, he could threaten to cancel more than $50 million worth of SDI contracts held by Aerospatiale, SEP, Contraves, and other Ariane partners. Despite the appeal of this sanction, however, there is another that is faster, cheaper, and at least as powerful: publicity. Detailed public criticism of the offer to Brazil would produce exactly what the companies hope to avoid—public responsibility for their actions. Under cover of secrecy, the exporters can quietly argue their case for export licenses to key officials. With exposure, the deal would founder as the European public demanded explanations from the companies and their respective governments. Just over a year ago Bonn was publicly humiliated by revelations that German companies had sold poison gas technology to Libya for its plant at Rabta. Public disclosure forced the German government to stop its dangerous exports and tighten its lax controls.

The Viking deal is an important test. If it goes through, there is nothing to stop Ariane or other space-launch companies from selling the same technology to Argentina, Brazil's rival, or to Pakistan, India's rival. ICBMs could spring up around the globe. And the developed nations will find that for the first time since World War II their greatest threat will come not from superpower confrontation, but from their own exports.

GARY MILHOLLIN is a professor of law at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control. GERARD WHITE is assistant director of the Project.

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Public television's Cuba problem.

NOBODY WATCHED

By Jacob Weisberg

On the evening of August 8, some PBS stations will show "Castro's Cuba: Two Views," a special produced by KTCA in Saint Paul/Minneapolis. The first of the views is an abridged version of *Nobody Listened*, a heart-wrenching documentary about human rights abuses in Cuba directed by Nestor Almendros, an Academy Award-winning cinematographer, and Jorge Ulla, a journalist. The second is *The Uncompromising Revolution*, an exercise in Fidelophilia by Saul Landau, a radical filmmaker and fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. The way the program came about reveals much about what's wrong at PBS.

Nobody Listened had its genesis in the mid-'80's release of such long-term prisoners as Huber Matos, Jorge Valls, and Armando Valladares, who had languished in Castro's jails for twenty years and more. Almendros, who had made *Improper Conduct*, a 1984 documentary about the Cuban government's mistreatment of homosexuals, and Ulla, a fellow Cuban exile, carried out extensive interviews with thirty ex-prisoners. The two-hour film that resulted (as opposed to the fifty-three-minute version that will be shown on PBS) draws its inspiration from Max Ophuls's *The Sorrow and the Pity* and Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*. Almendros and Ulla simply compile the stunning testimony of ex-political prisoners, who face the camera and tell of the tortures and horrific conditions they experienced. Among those interviewed are former *plantados*, literally the rooted ones, who refused compulsory "rehabilitation." Some were locked in small metal drawers and forced to wade in excrement. Others are crippled as a result of beatings and shootings by guards.

When *Nobody Listened* was screened at festivals around the world in 1988, it was lauded by critics and won numerous awards. It was broadcast, to great acclaim, on national television in France, Spain, and throughout Latin America. Yet the title of the film proved all too apt when Almendros and Ulla tried to get it shown on television in the United States. The pair began in early 1988 by offering the film to PBS at no cost. Sandy Heberer and Gail Christian of the public affairs division decided that because it was "highly controversial," the film should be balanced by a documentary that gave the other side. They urged Debra Hodgins, a producer and publicist whom Almendros and Ulla hired to represent the film, to apply to P.O.V., the primary PBS venue for documentaries that express a "point of view."

P.O.V., which is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, among others, seemed a natural choice because of its interest in Central America and the subject of human rights. Among its recent broadcasts were *Las Madres: The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo*, a film about the disappeared in Argentina, and *Fire from the Mountain*, an account of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. It also offered an opportunity for the film to be shown on nearly all of PBS's 331 national affiliates. Marc Weiss, P.O.V.'s director, initially expressed considerable interest in *Nobody Listened*. But after consulting his advisory board and delaying for many months, he rejected the film because of what he deemed its excessive length and its use of subtitles (although they're usually acceptable on public television), and because it "presented point of view as fact." Hodgins agreed to shorten the film, and offered strong endorsements of the film's accuracy from such human rights activists as Aryeh Neier, executive director of Americas Watch.

Based on this documentation, Weiss asked Almendros and Ulla to submit the film for P.O.V.'s 1990 season. They did—and again Weiss rejected it. Most of the members of the P.O.V. committee I contacted said they couldn't remember why the film was turned down. David Othmer, vice president of WHYY, a PBS affiliate in Philadelphia, said it was because *Nobody Listened* is "boring as shit," and denies that politics played a role in the decision. Weiss cites the pressure of too many good films competing for too few spots in the season's lineup, but acknowledges that "some people had problems with the politics."

Weiss himself was apparently one of them. In a letter to Almendros and Ulla, he disqualified the film because of an "inappropriate" $15,000 grant it had received from the National Endowment for Democracy, a semi-governmental agency that receives the bulk of its funding from Congress. "Recent articles in *The New York Times* and elsewhere indicated that NED was channeling money into the 'opposition' in the upcoming Nicaraguan election. . . . In my view, such activities make the NED no more appropriate as a funder of an independent film than would be the CIA. . . . I cannot in good conscience include *Nobody Listened* in a series dedicated to independent films," Weiss wrote to Almendros and Ulla. If the directors had accepted covert funding from, say, the CIA, Weiss would have had a good point. But NED money, like the NEA grants that pay part of his own salary, is open and aboveboard. Viewers can judge for themselves whether the NED grant—which constituted less than 10 percent of the film's total budget—compromised its "independence."

In fact, the funding problem cropped up only after the scandal over *Days of Rage*, a pro-Palestinian documentary that was found to have received secret funding from an Arab-American foundation supported by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia shortly before it was shown in September 1989. The official who was responsible for

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investigating the funding for *Days of Rage*, Gail Christian, resigned following the uproar. The incident has had an unfortunate chilling effect on the network. Instead of making PBS executives more wary of disingenuous producers who accept covert support, the dispute fueled their inclination to "balance" anything controversial into a tepid mediocrity.

Ironically, Weiss is one of those who claims to resist the pressure to play it safe. A few months earlier he was quoted by *The New York Times* defending PBS's screening of *Days of Rage*: "PBS ought not to shrink from showing this kind of program," he said. "If you have filmmakers who believe passionately in something . . . it's going to be controversial. They are not likely to find corporate underwriters. Certainly, they go for money to places they think are going to be sympathetic."

Weiss later apologized to the directors when he learned that the $15,000 of NED money had paid only for reprocessing the finished work. But he did not change his decision to reject *Nobody Listened*. Ulla calls Weiss's treatment of the film "malicious." Meanwhile, he and Almendros weren't having much better luck with other PBS bureaucrats. Two other producers—Blaine Baggett of KCET in Los Angeles and David Fanning of WGBH in Boston—passed on the film because of concerns about its bias.

After more than two years of searching, Almendros and Ulla finally found a PBS affiliate willing to sponsor their film. KTCA in Minneapolis agreed to package an edited version of *Nobody Listened* with Landau's *The Uncompromising Revolution*, a film that gave "the other side." The two documentaries would be accompanied by brief interviews with the directors, and by an introduction and wrap-up from Scott Simon, the host of National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition." Almendros says he hates the Landau film, but that he and Ulla decided that double-billing with a dishonest film was better than nothing.

In *The Uncompromising Revolution*, Castro leads Landau on a classic Potemkin tour of his happy island. Much is made of the country's achievements in education, health care, and social welfare. Landau praises Cuba's good works in Angola, and even accepts the need for a huge nuclear power station under construction after Fidel assures him that it will be much safer than such plants in the United States. On a visit to the Centro de Reeducación para Mujeres de Occidente, a women's prison, Landau puts the toughest question in the film to a group of rèpentant inmates: "In our country it is said that human rights abuses abound in Cuba." "No way!" the women respond in unison. "Perhaps they don't know what human rights means." According to a report on Cuba's prisons by the New York City Bar Association, "The women's prison is in many respects a showcase prison."

Because Simon offers no judgment about the veracity of either film, the thrust of the program as a whole is that the truth lies somewhere between the extreme right- and left-wing views represented. The truth, however, is entirely on the side of *Nobody Listened*. There is no reason its central message—that human rights have been systematically violated in Cuba—should be deemed a right-wing view, or need balancing out with one that is fanatically left-wing. "The strange thing is that PBS would never ask that a film against Pinochet be balanced out with a favorable one," Almendros says. KTCA edited Almendros and Ulla's criticism of PBS out of the interview that will precede the August 8 broadcast.

As in the dispute over restrictions on NEA funding, talk about censorship misses the point. PBS doesn't violate anyone's right to free expression when it decides not to sponsor a film, even if it does so for political reasons. What the network increasingly lacks is the courage to run programs that challenge its viewers in a serious way. Funding—even by interested parties—shouldn't disqualify any otherwise valid film so long as its sources are disclosed on screen. PBS ought to have broadcast *Nobody Listened*, in full and long ago, because it is an important film that is accurate and measured in its judgments. It ought to have rejected *The Uncompromising Revolution* because it is uncritical, full of distortions, and, like most propaganda, unwatchably dull. Were Landau's film worth showing on its merits, it should be shown separately, not as ballast for *Nobody Listened*. Instead PBS stalled, quavered, and worked out an absurd compromise. PBS treated Almendros and Ulla shabbily, no doubt partly because of its leftish political bias, but at least as much because of its increasing institutional bias against making waves. It would be unfortunate if the experience of "Castro's Cuba" made the network even more timid about showing films that risk offending someone. •

WARSAW POSTCARD

POINT OF NO RETURN

By Stanislaw Baranczak

The vessel of material reality has remained more or less the same since I left Warsaw almost ten years ago: the buildings in desperate need of renovation, the smell of leaded gasoline, the grayish complexion of people's faces, the dilapidated Polish Fiats parked on every sidewalk. But the vessel is filled now with a distinctly different fluid of life. In May 1980 Poland was a country where life stood still. In May 1990 life here still abounds in absurdities and bitter ironies, but it is moving forward.

A taxi driver at Okecie International Airport in

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Warsaw, leaning against his lovingly waxed new Mercedes, declared the fare for a ride downtown to be 60,000 zlotys. I gasped: in my time, 60,000 was a decent year's salary. Another cabbie drove up and lured me away with his announcement that he used a meter. When we arrived at my destination, though, the sum on the meter, multiplied by the official inflation rate of 250, ended up in the vicinity of 55,000. Seeing me fumbling unsuccessfully for a 5,000 note, the cabbie waved it aside with lordly disdain: "Don't bother, mister, it's all funny money anyway."

Five grand may be negligible for a cabbie, but for all its overgrowth of zeroes Polish money strikes me, for the first time in my life, as having some real value. The average Pole (who earns much less than the taxi driver) still does not have enough money, but now an amazing number of things can be bought with the money he does have. The free market economy begins literally at the street level, seen in the stands that operate legally beyond the network of official retail. They range from trailers and vans serving as mobile booths to cardboard boxes on which peddlers display their modest wares—say, five chocolate bars and two bottles of detergent bought in Germany. Farmers now sell meat off their trucks on every street corner in Warsaw. If not always hygienic, this sort of trade has already effaced that ineffaceable feature of life in a socialist state, lines in front of meat shops. By cutting out the middleman, street vendors are able to offer low prices, and competition translates into better service. A young man who sold me a couple of newspapers off a folded table ended the transaction with a smile and the Polish equivalent of "Have a nice day."

The dramatic switch to a free market economy—the unprecedented attempt at what has been called converting a bowl of fish soup back into an aquarium—has of course already caused negative side effects. The higher prices of rents and utilities are being particularly felt by the old and disabled, whose meager pensions and welfare benefits are hardly enough to survive on. The recently approved privatization of industry will no doubt cause massive layoffs and unemployment.

Increased money power and economic inequality have also already led to an increased number of robberies, burglaries, and muggings in Warsaw and other cities. This crime wave seems even more threatening as democratization ties the hands of the law enforcement agencies. The police used to be outside the law, but as a result were more efficient. In one of his more astonishing moves, Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki put the Catholic journalist Krzysztof Kozlowski in charge of cleaning up the twin organizations MO (Citizen's Militia) and SB (Security Service, i.e., the secret police), which were characterized by lawlessness and Mafia-like connections under Communist rule. The SB, in particular, is all but disbanded now, and only its anti-terrorist and counterespionage agencies remain in operation.

But the average cop on the beat—resenting his new superiors and being made a scapegoat by the media—has grown lax. While boarding a train to Krakow at Warsaw's Central Station, I suddenly found myself flanked by three gentlemen in an otherwise empty car corridor. I was saved by my two huge suitcases, which didn't allow the pickpockets to come too close. When I let out a scream, they fled, unobstructed by two policemen leisurely cruising the nearby platform.

I did have more pleasant encounters. Iza Jarosinska, now officially the liaison between the prime minister and the Parliament, seems to epitomize the spirit of the changes that have occurred. A specialist in Polish literature, she was spurred to political activity, just like millions of other apolitical Poles, by the emergence of Solidarity. During martial law, she became the chief collaborator of a legendary figure of the underground *konspira*. When the secret police cracked his pseudonym and arrested him, Jarosinska got arrested, too. My wife presented her with a bottle of Silkience hair conditioner. Jarosinska was pleased: months spent in a prison cell, she told us, did something to her hair, and this might help. This was her only reference to her ordeal. The authentic heroes of the martial law period are not inclined to talk about their past sufferings or feats of bravery. Not that they are modest: they are simply too involved in what they do now to dwell too much on the past.

We met Jarosinska in her office in the Council of Ministers building. She still gets a little lost in the maze of corridors and feels more at home in the Sejm, a couple of blocks away, where she listens to deputies' and senators' criticisms of the government in order to report them to the prime minister. I had never been in the Sejm before. In my time, the popular attitude to this sham institution was expressed in a joke: "Why is the Sejm building round? Because a circus can't be square."

The Sejm was not in session, but Jarosinska took us to see Bronislaw Geremek, a former professor of French cultural history who is now the leader of the parliamentary majority and whose name has been popping up in every debate concerning the future presidency. Geremek did not fear a return of the Communists. Their popularity is at a record low, even under the newly assumed name of Social Democrats. His worry was, rather, a possible rise of another loudmouthed demagogue who, under the painful belt-tightening imposed by the economic shock therapy, might exploit populist slogans laced with a dose of chauvinism and anti-intellectual sentiment. (This was not a specific reference to Lech Walesa.) I asked about the events that flared up in downtown Warsaw on May 1. With the symbolic import of this now-abolished Communist holiday clearly in mind, representatives of various conservative and nationalistic parties and splinter groups gathered for the first Congress of the Polish Right in the cavernous Congress Hall of the Palace of Culture, where once all the most important

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Communist festivities took place. A street brawl erupted between a hostile party of self-described leftish anarchists and a group of the Congress's bodyguards, most of them skinheads and some even dressed in T-shirts adorned with swastikas.

Geremek took it all in stride. A bunch of young neofascist idiots was obviously not representative of the entire Congress, which comprises much more moderate shades of the new right, from traditional nationalism to neoconservatism and economic "liberalism" (in the European sense of the word, which emphasizes the laissez-faire approach to economic matters). Moreover, the right is seriously divided on many fundamental issues, such as the rate of economic reform and the involvement of foreign capital in the nation's economy. And besides, the right-wing parties are minuscule.

In fact, all parties today are minuscule. One of the most unexpected outcomes of the forty-five-year rule of the Polish United Workers' Party is that people get sick at the very sound of the word "party." They want parliamentary democracy, of course, but they would rather do without "parties," "party lines," and "party platforms." This, too, may leave them an easy prey to the kind of demagoguery that could promise to solve all problems by turning people's anger against parties, politicians, and the "new nomenklatura."

I heard the last expression with increasing frequency. It's used to suggest that there is a new "ruling class"—the people, mostly intellectuals, who had been active in Solidarity and other opposition movements—that is as privileged and immovable as its predecessors. But all the talk seems to be an attempt to stir up the nation's most primitive instincts: desire for revenge and egalitarian hostility toward whoever is at the top. As was pointed out in two highly respected periodicals, the phrase has no meaning in the new political reality; no ruling party would reward its loyal members with official privileges, and if need be, any official can now be impeached and recalled by the voters. But rumors about the "leftists" in the Parliament and the government allegedly conspiring with the former Communists are fanned by those politicians who, rather than offer a consistent and convincing program, offer only hatred. One of those is the leader of a farmer's party, Roman Bartoszcze, who made an announcement in the Sejm—so far unsupported by any evidence—that he possesses documents revealing details of several government figures' past cooperation with the secret police.

Adam Michnik, editor of the independent daily *Gazeta Wyborcza*, has been assigned to investigate the archives left behind after the dissolution of the secret police—those documents, that is, that the secret police did not destroy. He did not want to talk about the contents of those files—he only rolled his eyes. I understand that he has seen documents that even Bartoszcze could not invent.

Still, in the Parliament, where Michnik is (despite his famous stutter) one of the most outspoken deputies, he never hesitates to oppose the simplistic demands to strip former Communists of any chance to participate in public life or to take over, legally or illegally, all the assets of the now-dissolved Communist Party. His own past experiences with the Communist regime—all those years in jail, the arrests, searches, and beatings—are known well enough to make him immune from the suspicion that he defends the old nomenklatura for some personal reasons. He hopes, instead, that the nation will understand that if the anti-Communist sentiment reaches for unconstitutional means, we can say goodbye to democracy in Poland. He who raises the shout "Hang the Reds!" may add, in the same breath, "Hang the Jews!" or "Hang the intellectuals!" And, in fact, he often does.

I spent a couple of hours at Michnik's place during this visit, as I did so often in the '70s, and the cluttered but capacious apartment was again full of people. A fine poet, Bronislaw Maj, had just arrived from Krakow. He brought with him a duffel bag full of copies of the first issue of *NaGlos* (Out Loud), a literary monthly that existed only in oral form throughout the '80s: a handful of writers gathered each month in Krakow to read their new works "out loud" to a large audience. Now, in spite of formidable financial obstacles, *NaGlos* is finally free to appear in print.

Censorship no longer exists in Poland: it has been unanimously scrapped by the Sejm and the Senate. The evidence can be found everywhere, from posters and graffiti covering the walls of Warsaw buildings to a typical Polish bookstore. Sprayed-on slogans range from "Jaruzelski to Siberia!" to "Fuck you" (in English, but for some profound reason transcribed phonetically in Russian Cyrillic) to "Make soup out of Kuron!"—an allusion to the free soup kitchens for the poor that Jacek Kuron, another former dissident and now the minister of labor, advocates in his wildly popular weekly chats on TV.

My last night in Poland was spent at the home of Wiktor Woroszylski, a fellow poet. The Woroszylskis live near a square that has recently regained its pre-1945 name of Woodrow Wilson Square, after forty-five years of being called The Paris Commune Square by the Communists. Wiktor's is another one of those marvelous Warsaw apartments where friends come at any time and you can always meet somebody you would like to talk to. When I entered, the eyes of my host twinkled: "Guess whom you are going to have your last dinner with?" I ventured an absurd joke: "The prime minister?" My friend replied matter-of-factly: "No, Tadeusz has some official function tonight. But it was close—in fact, our guest may well be the most important person in Poland these days." "Walesa?" "Are you kidding? No, had he even been in Warsaw, I wouldn't have invited him after what he recently said about waging war against the egghead government. Try again." "Chief of the secret police?" I asked. "Exactly," my friend beamed.

Minutes later the familiar face of Krzysztof Koz-

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lowski appears in the doorway. I last saw him a dozen years ago, when, as editor of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, the most popular weekly in Poland, he was taking part in a symposium on the role of the sacred in culture. These days, as minister of the interior and head of the Bureau for Protection of the State, he deals with profane rather than sacred issues. Yet his face is still the subtly skeptical face of an intellectual, and he has not lost his sense of humor. He performs a little pantomime of hesitation in front of the dinner table and asks with mock humility: "But will you really have me at your table? Me, a cop from the Security Service?" Everybody bursts into laughter. It is this unconstrained laughter of people amazed by the unexpectedness of what has happened to their lives that makes me feel a sudden surge of certainty: Yes, this is for real. There's no turning back. We are free people.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK's *Breathing Under Water and Other East European Essays* will be published this month by Harvard University Press.

Communists 'for a while.'

REFORM OR ELSE

By Gregory Freidin

MOSCOW

"We must speak about the future of Soviet antiquity," begins a 1937 poem by Osip Mandelstam. There has not been a better time than today or a better place than the 28th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for following Mandelstam's injunction. Notwithstanding two remarkable "firsts"—the stoic absence of caviar in the Congress cafeteria and the presence of a gaggle of foreign reporters—intimations of the death of the old rather than the birth of the new set the tone.

"This is my last Congress," Alexander Yakovlev, Mikhail Gorbachev's right-hand man, announced from the podium. "From now on," he continued after pausing just long enough for the delegates to gasp, "I would like to concentrate full time on my duties as a member of the Presidential Council." It surely was not a matter of health; Yakovlev looked far more robust than Marshal Yazov, the defense minister, who had to be helped down from the stage by two solicitous delegates, or former Moscow Party chief Lev N. Zaikov, who had trouble reading his prepared text (for example, mangling the word "anachronism" into something between "anarchism" and "onanism," touching off the Congress's first uproarious laugh), or another Politburo member, Nikolai Slyunkov, who, to use Gorbachev's own locution, "was no longer functioning." But none of these Brezhnevite gerontocrats was taking himself out of the running for future Politburos.

On the third day of the Congress, tape recorder in hand, I spotted Yakovlev ambling through the cloakroom and asked him to elaborate on his stunning declaration. The answer was abrupt: "I am not planning to be present at the next Congress, that's it." What if you were elected a delegate? "I think this won't happen," his voice was trailing off now. Even if you are elected delegate? I pressed him. He paused and looked me straight in the eye, "We should live that long." He smiled a broad relaxed smile and walked away. A real transfer of real power, away from the Party, was taking place "right now, this very moment, today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow," in Yakovlev's own passionate idiom.

For no matter how Paleolithic the delegates may have seemed, the example set by Yakovlev—followed by Gorbachev's other closest ally, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze—proved, shall we say, irresistible. No state official of top rank has a seat on the new Politburo. The Politburo itself, enlarged from twelve to twenty-four seats, has been transformed into a clearinghouse for regional Party interests, with membership reserved for the Party chairmen of the fifteen national republics. For the first time in Soviet history, the Party's top apparat has become less than the sum of its parts, each jealously guarding its own local prerogatives and powers. The new arrangement can no longer act as a brake on President Gorbachev's plans for radical reform, but neither can it provide him with excuses for delay. In effect, Gorbachev has shaken off the grip of the apparat while overtly remaining the Party's top leader. The swiftness of the German accords he concluded in the wake of the Congress shows how quickly and decisively he can move when unencumbered.

Of the three who made the perestroika revolution—Gorbachev, Yakovlev, and Shevardnadze—only Gorbachev remains linked to the Party leadership in any formal way, and he, too, has distanced himself considerably. Bowing to the will of the Congress, he condescended to its plea to find a bit of time in his busy presidential schedule for doing an occasional duty as the Party's First Person (the term "leader" has been discredited and is now taboo). But for all practical, day-to-day purposes, it is Vladimir Ivashko, the Second Person, who will be holding the Politburo bag. Handpicked by Gorbachev, Ivashko—sixty-two and aging fast—has the reputation of one of the Party's most loyal troopers, which is very loyal indeed.

If their public interaction during the first few hours of the Congress was any indication, Gorbachev does not possess a whole lot of respect for his Party deputy-to-be, whose turn it was to chair the preliminary proceedings. As Ivashko stumbled again and again in deciding between voice vote and roll call, an exasperated Gorbachev turned on his microphone and announced to the throng that Comrade Ivashko, then still the chairman of

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the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet, did not know how to run parliamentary proceedings. In a vintage Gorbachev gesture, that is, not standing on ceremony, he dismissed Ivashko and, mindful of losing the rhythm, went on to chair the session. Why, then, did he later pick Ivashko? The weight of Party history calls for caution in selecting the man to do the job Stalin held under Lenin. The fact that Gorbachev settled on Ivashko and not, say, on the minister of the interior, Vadim Bakatin, a visible and capable man for whom Yakovlev had lobbied in private, indicates that Gorbachev was not just being wary of raiding the government for scarce talent but was looking for specific, high-quality apparat skills and, above all, unstinting deference and loyalty to authority.

The overwhelming vote for Ivashko (he got 3,724 votes to 776 for Yegor Ligachev, who obstinately refused to withdraw his candidacy) demonstrated that the delegates had decided to throw their lot with Gorbachev. While many of them must see Gorbachev as the major cause of their travails, they also understand that without him the Party would disintegrate in an instant, exposing its administrative elite to uncontrollable popular outrage. Even the most dyed-in-the-wool Party apparatchiks I interviewed insisted on Gorbachev as their first and only choice. "There's no alternative to Gorbachev, not for a while," was the judgment of a Central Committee secretary of the loyalist wing of the Lithuanian CP.

"For a while" was, in fact, the favorite phrase of the delegates across the spectrum, including the group that had everybody worried—the top brass of the military. Two generals who were convinced that the U.S. reduction in military spending was just a smokescreen and whose taste in politics ran clearly toward the conservative conceded, after much prodding on my part, that the Party should, in due time, yield control over the military to the state. But why should the army of all the people need the Party of only some of the people in the first place? Because, one of the generals insisted, the Party was playing and could continue to play a constructive, educational role, adding with a chuckle, "for a while." For a while? "Yes, for a while, until we have a multiparty system." A similar position was taken by Andrei Godunov, a navy commander and one of the leaders of the Democratic Platform in Leningrad, who was politically the diametrical opposite of the two generals. Would he be leaving the Party after the Congress? "Not for a while," was his response. "Not so long as Party organizations can effectively defend the rights of servicemen or workers before the new institutions have the time to emerge."

Whither now? Gorbachev's science adviser, Yevgeni Velikhov, pointed to Yuri Prokofiev's speech. Prokofiev, chairman of the Moscow Party committee, proposed that the CPSU follow the example of the Italian Christian Democratic and the Japanese Liberal Democratic parties, which, by "reproducing and resolving within themselves society's contradictions," managed to transform "totalitarian states" into stable democracies. A member of the new Politburo, he echoed Yakovlev's plea to the members of the Democratic Unity coalition to display greater tolerance for their opponents in the Party. Gorbachev's Presidential Council, which brings the cosmopolitan Yakovlev together with the parochial nationalist Valentin Rasputin, follows a similar model. This push for intra-Party tolerance and flexibility is bound to render the Communist Party unrecognizable, making it likely that one way or another, the next congress will not be a congress of the CPSU.

If Gorbachev displayed little patience in his dealings with his future deputy, he treated the body of Congress delegates with barely concealed contempt. Asked by the Congress newspaper, *The Thirteenth Microphone* (produced by the top conservative-bashers in the Party), to comment on his view of the Congress during the first two days of the session, Gorbachev judged the body of delegates "inadequate" in comparison with his other constituency, Soviet society at large. "The country," he went on, "possesses a greater desire to move forward, not to dilly-dally, but to change, to change, to change."

These words anticipated the tongue-lashing the Congress received from Gorbachev on July 11. Point after point, he brought to public view every failing of the Congress: the delegates' parochial mentality could not do justice to the historic scale of perestroika; they had trouble understanding that their future was bound with the transfer of the "plenitude of power to the Soviets at all levels"; "three-quarters of them" committed a "disturbing" error by excluding the word "market" from the title of the committee for economic affairs; some, acting out of "stupidity or sinister motives," attempted to reject the benefits of privatization in agriculture; some were muddle-headed enough to imagine that the "ideology of socialism was a textbook" and could be generated on an empty stomach by people "unversed in common human values"; still others dared to question his foreign policy: "Did we act wisely in deciding against intervention in developments under way in Eastern Europe? Well, do you want the tanks again? Shall we again teach them how to live?" "I simply do not know who we are dealing with here," he exclaimed in desperation when the turn came for the detractors of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," said the general secretary of the CPSU, in a stunningly un-Marxist allusion (Matthew 13:9, *inter alia*), calling to account those officials who actively disagreed with the government policy. They should either keep their opinion to themselves, "or, if they are decent people, resign." Gorbachev's bill of particulars and his concluding warning were the final terms of the bargain that the Congress struck with him by electing him general secretary. In effect, the Party apparatchiks have agreed to the separation of the Party from the state and its concomitant transformation from the Party into a party.

Boris Yeltsin, in his first Congress address, con-

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fronted the delegates with a harsh and sobering dilemma. They would either transform the Party into a loose coalition of social-democratic forces or face the growing ire of the people, with the distinct prospect of having the Party leadership face a latter-day version of the Nuremberg trials. He could not resist the opportunity to name the first one to be thrown to the dogs—the man who initiated and supervised the hated anti-drinking campaign, a transparent reference to Ligachev, who had just owned up to his leading role in the debacle. Yeltsin's was no idle talk. The windows of *Moscow Pravda*'s editorial offices on Gorky Street display a poster depicting a man behind bars wearing a T-shirt with the initials CPSU emblazoned on it; and Stanislav Govorukhin's documentary, *This Is No Way To Live*, with its blatant invitation to set up a Nuremberg for the Communist Party, is playing to packed houses. Gorbachev is offering the Party a third way, perhaps even more radical if less abrupt—reshaping it on the post-fascist Christian-Democratic model. If his plan works, he can take the credit for it. If it does not, he will have little trouble cutting himself off from a hopelessly antiquated institution. The dilemma spelled out by Yeltsin is the sword of Damocles that Gorbachev is dangling over the head of every apparatchik.

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This *will* be on the test.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED: A LITE HISTORY

By Josef Joffe

MUNICH

Class, something really big happened last week. What was it?—"Madonna went to Europe."—Good, Europe is good, but that's not quite it. Something to do with Germany. And war.—"I know! The Germans won the soccer championship."—That was the week before, but you're getting closer. The Germans and the . . . who? . . . did what?—"The Who? They played with Pink Floyd in Berlin?"—No, no, no, no! OK, let me tell you . . .

Last week, with a chummy declaration of Russian surrender, the cold war came to an end. There was no ticker-tape parade down Broadway, no dancing on the Champs-Elysées. Unlike 1918 and 1945, 1990 didn't play in Peoria. But that is no reason to ignore an epochal moment that future historians will bill right up there alongside 1815 (the end of the Napoleonic Wars), 1713 (the end of the War of the Spanish Succession), and 1648 (the end of the Thirty Years' War).

July 16, 1990, will get a boldface entry in the Encyclopedia Britannica ("Europe, history of") because it marks a similar watershed. On that day, Mikhail Gorbachev agreed with Helmut Kohl to let a reunited Germany stay in NATO and to remove his troops from East Germany—all 380,000 of them—within the next four years. This may not sound like much; the United States pulled half a million out of Vietnam in the early 1970s, and California is still there. But as far as Europe is concerned, the Soviet bow-out is History. It signifies nothing less than the end of a struggle over Europe that began in 1914, Russia's definitive retreat from that struggle, and hence the birth of a new European order.

The cold war, though it saw plenty of peripheral engagements in places like Korea (cf. "war in," "*M*A*S*H*") and Cuba (cf. "missile crisis," "*Dr. Strangelove*"), was above all a contest over Europe and Germany. If you like your history really big, you might call the cold war "Part Three" in a Wagnerian cycle (hence the British refrain, "We'll hang our washing on the Siegfried Line") titled *The Century of Total War*, libretto by Raymond Aron. Part I took place between 1914 and 1918; Part II was World War II; Part III was the cold war, circa 1947 to 1990.

The main characters in Part I, a.k.a. the Great War, were Germany, Russia, Austria, France, and Britain—with the United States, in the ingenue role, making a late entrance in the last act. The war was triggered by a certain Mr. Gavrilo Princip when he murdered the Austrian crown prince in a place called Sarajevo. But that, class, was only the *immediate* cause. The *real* cause was a German grab for all-out hegemony.

Latecomers to the table of the great powers (cf. "Bismarck," "1871"), the Germans had learned fast, picking up where previous hegemonists had dropped out. Nobody liked Kaiser Bill and his spike-helmeted Prus-

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sians, but Wilhelm II was acting out a well-thumbed European scenario—the "corrupt game of despots and princes," which had sent the Americans' straight-laced ancestors heading for Plymouth Rock. The contest had started with the birth of the European nation-state in the fifteenth century; the heavy action began in the seventeenth. The Thirty Years' War of 1618 to 1648 (with at least sixty-five participants) was still a general tryout, like at the beginning of *A Chorus Line*. Then the kick line boiled down to pairs, and this—a series of "dominant conflicts"—is what European history has been all about until this very day.

First there were Louis XIV and Charles V. Although (or because) Charles was Louis's grandson, the Sun King was riled that, in 1700, the fifth Charles inherited too many crowns from the second Charles. Worse, No. 2—with no kids of his own—wasn't even No. 5's real father. On the basis of a dubious will, Charles V now owned all of Spain, half of Italy, the Low Countries, and everything between Saxony and Serbia. Louis felt hemmed in by this; and as there was no probate court around, he started the War of the Spanish Succession. While he was at it, he figured: Why not be done with this balance-of-power jive and take all of Europe?

Except that the Duke of Marlborough, later to be honored with the name of a cigarette, wouldn't let him. And so the war ended amid general exhaustion with the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which proclaimed a "just equilibrium of power." But remember this, class: the hegemonist always rings twice. Though they had broken the Spanish-Austrian connection, the French could not forget Marlborough (they still smoke Gauloises). For the next century, they intermittently fought the Brits all over the world, which is why the Seven Years' War in Europe had its trans-Atlantic counterpart, the French and Indian Wars.

But the French really got going for the second time after they had guillotined their king and invented democracy. You see, democracy turned out to be the greatest boon to warfare since the crossbow. It gave you an ideology that mobilized the millions (look up "*levée en masse*"). This meant cheap soldiers and unlimited goals that make short shrift of such kingly stuff as the balance of power. Revolutionary élan took the French all the way to Moscow. But once again, the Brits struck, finishing Bonaparte off at Waterloo, which is why Wellington has a piece of beef named after him and Napoleon only a puff pastry.

At the Vienna Congress in 1815, French hegemonial ambitions were laid to rest amid much ballroom dancing. The powers were so exhausted afterward that they would not start a really big war until 1914, which points to the Vienna waltz as a greatly underestimated factor of peace. But there's always some tough guy who doesn't dance. This brings us back to the twentieth, the century of total war. The imperial Germans had everything required to go Louis and Napoleon one better: a sense of encirclement, paranoid nationalism, and a high-torque industrial machine. In the end they only got as far as Versailles, because none of the other Europeans wanted to click heels or wear monocles.

Still, like Spain and France before it, Germany had to try one more time. While the French revolutionary armies at least had left behind the ideas of *liberté*, wholesome concepts that shape much of our existence today, the Nazis used quite another idea to propel them to the gates of Moscow. Hegemony was to belong to the *Herrenvolk*, the "master race," and so World War II was truly total—unleased not just against armies but against human beings as such. To give you a sense of the "century of total war," World War II took the lives of 55 million.

But there was still Part III, the "cold war." Now it was the turn of the Soviets. Maybe they too felt encircled, having crushed the Nazi beast only to find another, far more potent foe—the United States—on their doorstep. But they behaved more like encirclers than encirclees. As Stalin put it: "This war [World War II] is not as in the past. Whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system . . . as far as his army can reach." Which he did. Having liberated Eastern Europe, he enslaved it again. Having conquered half of Germany, he wanted to make sure that the rest would not be part of the West, figuring that without Germany, America's containment policy would fall in tatters. His successors continued to dish out grief, threatening the French and the British with nuclear war at the time of Suez, unleashing the Berlin Crisis (1958-62), building up a huge war machine in Eastern Europe, and finally fielding one SS-20 missile per week to turn Western Europe into a nuclear hostage.

Let me digress for a moment. Before you were born, class, we had a debate in academia: Who started the cold war? Well, the "revisionists," trying to lay the guilt on the United States, had it wrong. All FDR wanted was to go back to Hyde Park, and so, at Yalta, he had promised "Uncle Joe" that the United States would pull out of Europe by 1947. But then the Soviets began communizing Eastern Europe and getting their sticky fingers all over Germany and beyond, and the cold war started in earnest. Today, the cold war is over precisely because the Russians, handing in their CPSU cards, are pulling out and finally laying off Germany. Q.E.D. They tried to do what Charles, Louis, Napoleon, Wilhelm, and Adolf also tried to do—and they failed. This is why both Eisenhower and Bush have a jacket named after them.

Now, why did the cold war claim not a single life—if you ignore Korea, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and a few Russian interventions in Eastern Europe? Anyone? That's right: nuclear weapons. You see, Louis didn't have to worry about somebody breaking the mirrors at Versailles when he tussled with Charles; at worst, he'd lose a province there, a fortress there. Pins on a map. When the kaiser's troops left Berlin Station in August '14, they yelled, "We'll be back for Christmas!" But with nukes having atomized their Tannenbäume, today's conquerors might return to a glowing

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pile of rubble. Nor did the *Wehrmacht* boys foresee how unpleasant the war would become. Since the 1950s, however, everybody has known with horrifying precision exactly what nuclear weapons will do to them. (No, don't pop *Back to the Future III* into the VCR; get *On the Beach*.)

You see, though the United States and the USSR had assembled the largest peacetime armies the world has ever seen, none dared fire the first shot for fear of what the last one would bring. The strategy mavens call this "crisis stability." It's a paradox. Because nuclear weapons create absolute insecurity, they confer absolute security. You can always threaten the other guy with total extinction, and you don't have to call up your reserves or your allies. (Remember: It was the cumbersome mobilization machinery—who would be ready first?—that sucked everybody in the maws of World War I.) With nukes you can rely on yourself, and you can simultaneously deter any and all comers. That gives great powers a margin of security they never enjoyed before.

The Russians, apart from being flat broke, have finally understood what neo-isolationist strategists in the United States have proclaimed all along. In an age of nuclear missiles you don't need allies. For the Soviets, in fact, "allies" were a liability. They required costly armies to police, and beating them up gave the Soviets a bad press. So while Russians will debate "Who lost Germany?" for the next twenty years, they know in their hearts that it doesn't matter—at least not in terms of real national security. (For the same reason, nobody in America has ever suggested going *back* into Vietnam.)

Being broke made Soviet surrender advisable; nuclear weapons made it palatable; and the collapse of Leninist ideology made it inevitable. If the empire itself no longer believes in its raison d'être, why should the Communist creed radiate beyond the core? To be sure, power in Eastern Europe came out of the barrels of Soviet tanks. But the Soviets and their satraps thought that History was on their side, and that added conviction to the clout. Toss out the creed, and you toss in the towel. This is where the "century of total war," which we could glimpse dimly as early as 1793, has truly come to an end. What started with a classic hegemonic conflict in Part I and was driven to murderous "perfection" in Part II has finished with a semi-happy ending in the last scene of Part III—after forty-odd years of total struggle, though "cold" it luckily did remain.

Class, I've come to the end, too. For tomorrow's section meetings I want you to think about the following questions. Are we headed for a "century of total peace," as some of my colleagues, believing in the "end of history," have proclaimed? Can you think of other "integralist ideologies" that are not seriously dead? Please look up "Islam." Also, go back to the very first integralist ideology, namely nationalism, and apply it to contemporary events in Serbia, Lithuania, Kosovo, Azerbaijan, the West Bank, and the Ukraine. Think in general about the connection between collapsing empires and war. Finally, do try to think about the United States in Europe, which is now set to go home. How did the Great Protector pacify ancient conflicts in Western Europe, and who will play that role once America is gone? Also, Russia has had only one try—will it, too, go for a second? What about Germany, once more unified and No. 1 in Europe? How's that? Did I hear "three Reichs and you're out?" All right, that's it. Class dismissed. And brush up on your German. •

The quietly great secretary general.

JAVIER OF THE U.N.

By Morton Kondracke

Widely disparaged or given up for dead, the United Nations is suddenly alive again and doing useful work. Last year it fielded an army of 8,000 soldiers, policemen, and civilians to get South Africa out of Namibia and Cuban troops out of Angola. The year before it oversaw the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and supervised a cease-fire in the million-casualty Iran-Iraq war. This year it monitored elections in Nicaragua, disarmed the contras, and commenced negotiations between the government and Communist rebels in El Salvador. Almost certainly, the U.N. will successfully broker resolution of a conflict over the Western Sahara. And if conditions get worked out, it may supervise elections in Haiti, open the port of Massawa in Ethiopia for famine relief, broker an end to a leftist rebellion in Guatemala, help get talks going between North and South Korea, and, in a large and risky operation, supervise a cease-fire and elections in Cambodia.

Meanwhile, the U.N. has substantially patched up

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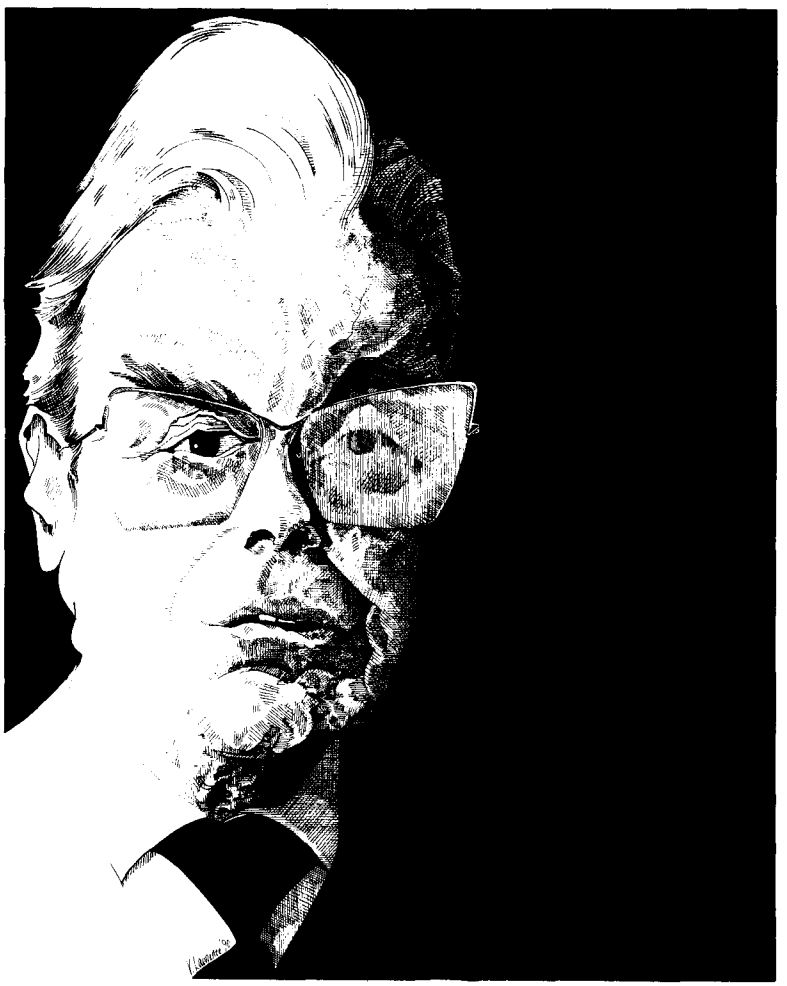
relations with its foremost benefactor and critic, the United States. Fed up with chronic anti-Western agitation in the General Assembly and in various subagencies such as UNESCO, with extravagant waste (topped off by the infamous $94 million convention center approved for war-ravaged Ethiopia), with packing of the U.N. bureaucracy with Soviet spies, and with its inability to influence budgeting while footing 25 percent of the organization's bills, the United States stopped paying its assessment in 1985. The Reagan administration resumed partial payments in late 1986, asserting that reform was under way. Last year President Bush promised full U.S. payment of annual assessments and repayment of arrearages. Congress is about to vote on paying the overdue $559 million over five years.

The United States is still far from delighted with the way the U.N. is managed, but it has won a virtual veto over the budget, expenses are being held to zero real growth, and the U.N. bureaucracy has been pared by 12 percent. There is also a marked reduction in ideological posturing. Resolutions to oust Israel from the General Assembly get fewer votes each year, particularly as the Soviet Union abstains and Eastern Europe votes no. For the first time in forty-five years, the United States and the Soviet Union in 1989 jointly sponsored a resolution pledging cooperation to fulfill the U.N. Charter, and the Soviets (despite grave economic difficulties) are paying what they owe after years of refusal to support U.N. peacekeeping operations.

With the cold war over, the "Non-Aligned" bloc has less and less to be non-aligned about and is in the process of breaking up into regional and economic interest groups. A recent General Assembly special session on economic development dropped demands for a New International Economic Order in which rich nations would be obligated to make massive wealth transfers to poor nations. Instead, the Assembly called for aid and debt relief—but also acknowledged the responsibility of poor countries to shape up their economies to attract investment.

Both a mover in and a beneficiary of all this change is the cautious, undramatic, yet skillful and persistent seventy-year-old secretary general of the U.N., Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who has held the office since 1982. By not giving up when the going was rough, by working at problems that seemed insoluble, by winning the confidence of people who trusted almost nobody else, by being in the right place when the dawn broke, and by knowing what to do afterward, Pérez de Cuéllar already is widely considered by most U.N.-watchers to be the second-most-effective secretary general ever (after Dag Hammarskjöld). By the time his second term ends in 1992, he may be recognized as the best yet and as the person who paved the way for a successor (if he does not succeed himself) to make the U.N. the worldwide security guarantor that its founders envisioned in the 1940s.



PÉREZ DE CUÉLLAR BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who battled the Soviet-Third World bloc as U.S. ambassador to the U.N. in 1975 and 1976, the heyday of anti-Western conspiracies, says that Pérez de Cuéllar already outstrips Hammarskjöld, the mystical Swede who ran the U.N. from 1953 until 1961, when he was killed inspecting the massive decolonization operation he had put together in the Congo. "Hammarskjöld was secretary general of the postwar U.N., when it was an effective organization and there was a Western majority in the General Assembly. Pérez de Cuéllar took an organization that had almost self-destructed and become irrelevant, and found a role for it that no one expected. He's turned out to be the first secretary general of the post-cold war era."

Other Americans contend—and Pérez de Cuéllar concedes—that none of what he's accomplished would have been possible during the cold war, which caused all disputes to become ideological and prevented consensus on peacekeeping operations. The U.N. has conducted five such operations in the past two years, compared with thirteen over the previous

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forty years. "Pérez de Cuéllar could have been Jesus Christ and five years ago he couldn't have accomplished anything," says Joseph Fromm of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. "Now there's a shared interest in defusing conflict, and to his credit he has taken advantage of the opportunity with extraordinary skill."

U.N.-watchers disagree as to whether Pérez de Cuéllar is an activist secretary general scouring the world for conflicts to settle or a passive diplomat who waits for countries to come to him with their troubles. The Reagan administration's assistant secretary of state for international organizations, Alan Keyes, calls him "the quintessential diplomat, somebody who can facilitate an effect without causing it, the very definition of a catalyst."

Pérez de Cuéllar had nothing to do with making peace in Namibia, says Keyes. "The person who did it, without getting credit, was Chet Crocker," Reagan's top Africa policy-maker. Indeed, Crocker initially displaced the U.N., understanding that South Africa regarded it as an enemy. He also developed the much-abused policy of "constructive engagement" to get South Africa talking to *somebody*, and then devised the strategy of linking South African withdrawal from Namibia with Cuban withdrawal from Angola, which the U.N. formally condemned. (Crocker says that Pérez de Cuéllar, "my favorite international civil servant," publicly opposed linkage but privately told Africans it was the only way a settlement ever would happen.)

Similarly, Keyes says that it was forceful U.S. policies in Central America, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf that created the possibility of settlements, withdrawals, or cease-fires, which the U.N. was then invited to supervise. "Pérez de Cuéllar is very good. He does not get in the way. He's good at turning sideways and disappearing when other interests are in play. When people are ready to agree, he's there to help." A Bush administration official says, "The secretary general doesn't have the resources to be a real peacemaker or a policeman. He's more like a marriage counselor."

However, one of Pérez de Cuéllar's top aides, fellow Peruvian Alvaro de Soto (brother of the economic theoretician Hernando de Soto), says this understates Pérez de Cuéllar's initiative. Empowered by the U.N. Charter to "inform" the Security Council of potential threats to peace, de Soto says, Pérez de Cuéllar is constantly talking to parties in conflict, either directly or through a personal representative, asking about their readiness for a settlement, offering U.N. "good offices," structuring potential settlement options, and working with (or on) the five permanent members of the Security Council to put them into effect.

It's a mark of Pérez de Cuéllar's subtlety and diplomatic skill that big powers such as the United States think they are urging him to act, while his boosters (such as Moynihan) say it's he who gets them to urge him to get involved. U.S. diplomats say that the Bush administration decided to ask the U.N. into Central America, for instance, while de Soto points out that Pérez de Cuéllar first quietly proposed U.N. assistance to the nations of the region in 1986. The Central American presidents formally asked him to intervene in 1989. De Soto is his special emissary.

Everyone agrees that Pérez de Cuéllar doesn't ever court glory, exhibit zeal, or make stirring speeches. In fact, in public he is deadly dull. In his reticence, he's the exact opposite of Hammarskjöld, who made himself out to be the personal embodiment of the U.N. Charter, if not of God's will. To some observers, lack of charisma is a drawback. "Somebody needs to be the conscience of the world," says former Carter administration official C. William Maynes. "It's a role the secretary general logically could fill. Unfortunately, for all his other qualities, Pérez de Cuéllar does not articulate things in a way that makes journalists leap to their word processors."

Yet Maynes acknowledges that a secretary general who got too much publicity likely would be cut to ribbons by the big powers, who want their own leaders to go down in history for peacemaking. "Pérez de Cuéllar is not passive like U Thant," says Fromm, referring to the Burmese who was secretary general from 1961 to 1971 in the midst of the cold war. "On the other hand, he doesn't think that the U.N. is a third superpower."

Pérez de Cuéllar does seem eager for the organization to expand its influence. His top aide, Indian Virendra Dayal, says that before he leaves office he would like to finish what he's begun—to achieve actual peace (as opposed to cease-fires) in Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, and Cyprus, his first responsibility as a U.N. special emissary in 1975. He is said to be more cautious about the proposed Cambodia operation, fearing it would be costly and might expose U.N. forces to hostile fire. And apparently he ardently favors a U.N.-sponsored international conference on the Middle East, which is unlikely to take place as long as the United States and Israel fear it will operate against their interests.

Supporters of Israel in the United States do not regard Pérez de Cuéllar as an ally, but consider him a fair man and a gigantic improvement on his predecessor, Kurt Waldheim, a secret ex-Nazi who shamelessly curried favor with U.N. radicals and raised no objection to the infamous 1975 General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism. Pérez de Cuéllar is said to regard the resolution as unfair and counterproductive but worries that a repeal effort will reignite ideological passion. U.N. officials say he also counsels the Arabs to quit trying to oust Israel, on the grounds that it enrages the United States.

In his 1989 report on U.N. activities, Pérez de Cuéllar declared that the U.N. "needs to demonstrate its capacity to function as guardian of the world's security," and suggested that the organization have satellite intelligence available to it (presumably supplied by Se-

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curity Council members), a reserve fund to finance peacekeeping operations, and the ability to send larger forces to keep hostile forces apart. Eventually, he said, international consensus might make it possible to pressure angry parties to settle their grievances and not resort to force.

Pérez de Cuéllar also wants the U.N. to play a bigger role in economic development and protection of the environment. He has appointed former Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi as a personal representative to investigate debt reduction, and hopes to narrow political differences between rich and poor countries at a World Conference on Environment and Debt in Brazil in 1992. He said last year that he detects "the birth of a new kind of loyalty, an Earth-patriotism, a looking at the planet and its atmosphere as an object for protection and not for aggression and pillage."

American officials say it will take more than eloquent statements and skilled diplomacy for the U.N. to fulfill even Pérez de Cuéllar's ambitions. They contend it will take managerial reorganization of a type that even Pérez de Cuéllar's admirers say is beyond him—a consolidation of duplicate subagencies (such as the three now supervising narcotics control, the dozens in economic development, and the increasing numbers for environmental affairs); the elimination of unnecessary programs (such as the $2 million decolonization program in a world now virtually without colonies); appointment of a deputy secretary general; and transfer of bureaucratic slots from economic oversight to peacekeeping.

The biggest challenge facing the U.N., though, is picking Pérez de Cuéllar's successor, and speculation is beginning in earnest about who it will be. Africans claim it is their turn to have a secretary general, and several candidates are being touted, including Senegal's president, Abdou Diouf; a former president of Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo; former finance minister Bernard Chidzero of Zimbabwe; Tanzanian President Salim Salim; and Ugandan diplomat Olara Otunnu. But the Africans' lack of unity hurts, as does the fact that the continent trails the world in economic development.

Other potential candidates include Tommy Koh, Singapore's former ambassador to Washington; former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias; Finnish diplomat Martti Ahtisaari, who oversaw U.N. Namibia operations; former Norwegian Premier Gro Brundtland, who would be the U.N.'s first female secretary general; Sadruddin Aga Khan, former U.N. high commissioner for refugees; and Ali Alatas, Indonesia's foreign minister.

Pérez de Cuéllar asserts to everyone that it's time for him to quit, and there's every reason to believe he means it. He is aging, has suffered a heart attack and undergone bypass surgery, and reportedly has run down his personal fortune. He had to cut short a recent trip to Europe and Africa on doctor's orders. With a new era dawning when the U.N. might really become the world's peacemaking agency and problem-solving forum, it would seem to be time for a vigorous young person to take charge. On the other hand, if such a person cannot be agreed upon, the world body could do far worse than to make do a little longer with probably the best secretary general it's ever had. •

California exceptionalism, anointed in blood.

A WOMAN OF INDEPENDENT MEANS

By Sidney Blumenthal

Dianne Feinstein is quite calmly poised on the fault line of American politics. If she wins her race for governor of California, Republican hopes for gaining control of Congress over the next decade will be dashed and Democratic hopes for gaining the White House buoyed. After the reapportionment of the House of Representatives based on the 1990 census, the California delegation will constitute one-eighth of the Congress. If a Republican does not preside as governor in a state where the Democrats control the legislature, the GOP will play almost no role in the redistricting. At the same time, there can be no realistic plan by any presidential nominee of the Democratic Party to win the Electoral College without figuring in California. For a beaten party, a Feinstein victory will be taken as a tremor of great possibility.

For the candidate, this sweeping prospect has been achieved against a peculiar combination of odds. More than once she has ridden into the chaos of the void and come out the other side, her coiffure unruffled. She has faced nearly all manner of bedlam and mayhem: familial

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insanity, divorce, illness, death, isolation, defeat, murder. More than ten years ago, she announced her retirement from politics; within hours she was kneeling on the floor of City Hall, literally covered with flowing blood, which anointed her mayor of San Francisco. "I've just had a lot of death," she told me with composure. "And I've found that it does two things. It can make you very bitter, turn you very much into yourself, or it can give you the strength to open up and be there for others. If there's one thing about politics, it's the life capsule sped up. You see much more of death, violence. You see the renewal of life. Whether you want it or not, you see it."

Feinstein gives the impression of a resolved personality. With audiences large and small, she conveys an unusual empathy, even when she has scant direct experience with what she is addressing. But she also maintains an appropriate distance. One always senses her discretion; nothing about her is out of place. Her fusing of empathy and self-control, warmth and coolness, reflects a mature equilibrium. In her heels she stands at nearly six feet tall, and in her conservative suits never appears less than dignified. When she greeted Queen Elizabeth upon Her Majesty's arrival in San Francisco, "it was hard to tell who was more regal," says a hostile politico with grudging admiration.

"Tough but caring" is her slogan, reflecting her political persona, which has unexpectedly acquired charisma. "It's a great mystery," says Sal Russo, a Republican political consultant, who has been conducting focus group research for the California GOP. Feinstein, after all, had hitherto inspired respect, not enthusiasm. "I was shocked by the intensity for Feinstein. Reagan did the same thing. People are not as ideological as political consultants or reporters. They want some leadership."

"What people don't want anymore in politics," says Feinstein, "is people who are pablum, who want to have it both ways, who don't stand up and take a position." As for her opponent, Senator Pete Wilson, the ever-positioning Republican, she says: "He is pablum. The politics he espouses are pablum."

The pablum factor, to be sure, has served him well in the past, making him the right dull man at the right time. Feinstein is banking on the moment now calling for the right woman. In the past, she had been frequently out of political sync, the moment out of her grasp. But now she is riding a slipstream that seems naturally to carry her along.

Time and again, Feinstein has faced mortality itself and had no choice but to start over. Her surmounting of fatal caprice, at least as much as her position in favor of, say, the Big Green environmental initiative, has had a profound appeal to women especially. Her personal saga is her greatest political asset, transcending her position on this or that issue. For Feinstein, the personal is the political. But her story has drawn a shock of recognition that translates into charisma partly because she has suddenly fit the movements of larger political forces.

Dianne Feinstein's life is more vivid than her restrained image. She was born fifty-six years ago in San Francisco to a prominent surgeon and professor, Leon Goldman, and a Catholic ex-fashion model and nurse, Betty. To the world beyond the front door, all in the Goldman family appeared to be going very well indeed. But Betty Goldman suffered from undiagnosed brain damage, masked by alcoholism, that manifested itself in unpredictable and violent behavior. Dianne and her two sisters were often beaten and threatened. She recalls several of her mother's suicide attempts, and her father, the physician, frantically trying to wake the comatose woman, making her vomit up sleeping pills. If Dianne Feinstein appears controlled, polished, even stiff, it may be because she was raised between the poles of decorum and derangement.

Her early introduction to politics came through her Uncle Morris, who took her on happy outings to City Hall, as if to a sporting event, to observe "the Board of Stupidvisors," as he put it. After graduating from Stanford, where she won the race for student body vice president, the coed's traditional top slot, she married a young lawyer and soon had a child. But the marriage quickly and bitterly failed, and at the age of twenty-four she was left alone with her nine-month-old daughter, living off alimony, without a profession.

Her interest, as it happened, was in criminal justice. She had spent a year studying the state system on a foundation fellowship after graduation. Now she wrote Governor Pat Brown, an acquaintance of her father's, inquiring about employment. She was offered a position on the Women's Board to Terms and Paroles. Over five years, she spent much of her time in the state's jails, passing judgment on more than 5,000 prisoners. She was acknowledged as an expert on criminal justice and appointed to several commissions. She also opposed capital punishment.

Dianne remarried, this time to Bertram Feinstein, nineteen years older and, in a startling asymmetry with her brain-damaged mother, a brain surgeon. In 1969 she won a seat on the Board of Supervisors, and because she was the top vote-getter became its president.

Twice she ran for mayor and was defeated. Her opponents taunted her as a rich bitch, "a Pacific Heights matron," out of touch with blue-collar whites and minorities alike, a cultural outcast in the countercultural capital. In San Francisco the dream of the Diggers' utopia had turned rancid; it was the age of Altamont, the Black Panther Party, and Patty "Tanya" Hearst: "It's just a shot away . . ."

Even in San Francisco, where nobody anybody knew voted for Richard Nixon in his landslide re-election, there was a resentful reaction of a Silent Majority. In 1975 George Moscone, the liberal, barely held off a conservative challenger for mayor; in office Moscone assiduously courted all the constituency groups, even to the extent of appointing Jim Jones, the cultish leader of the People's Temple, chairman of the city's housing commission.

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Feinstein, for her part, was distracted from politics by private ordeals. Her father died of cancer, and her beloved husband contracted the disease as well; his death was a long and painful one. In the end, she was alone again, emotionally drained, seemingly with no will to carry on in public life.

Quietly, she told a few reporters she was quitting politics. Later that same day, November 27, 1978, she looked up from her desk to see a distraught former supervisor, Dan White, racing past her office with a pistol. Within seconds she heard a shot. She ran into the office of supervisor Harvey Milk, the leading gay politician in the city, and found him crumpled on the floor. She lifted his hand, trying to feel his pulse, and her finger slipped into a gaping bullet hole. Both Milk and Moscone, who had been shot minutes earlier, were dead. By the law of succession, Dianne Feinstein was mayor.

Her experience now began to serve her. While others fell apart, she was serene. "She was poised. She was eloquent. She was restrained. And she was reassuring and strong," editorialized *The San Francisco Chronicle*. She won re-election a year later.

And she remarried. Her husband, Richard Blum, a highly successful entrepreneur and economic adviser to the city, led a Pacific Rim lifestyle that extended beyond his far-flung investments. He was a long-distance runner, had scaled Mount Everest, befriended Sir Edmund Hillary and the Dalai Lama, and was made an honorary consul of Nepal. Blum would bankroll her future political career.

Though Mayor Feinstein prided herself on being at home on the streets of San Francisco, making herself very visible, her unfriendly critics labeled her "Snow White" and "Goody Two-Shoes." Soon after she took office she banished blue jeans and T-shirts from the City Hall work force. With her manners and wealth, she was not exactly the saloon queen of the Tenderloin, the majorette of Castro Street, the toast of the Barbary Coast. It was said that she didn't care who you went to bed with so long as you were in bed by eleven. She vetoed a resolution that would have granted full benefits to the live-ins of gay city employees, while she desperately attempted to close the bathhouses at the beginning of the AIDS epidemic. She also satisfied neither developers nor neighborhood activists by forging a compromise over downtown construction. Then a loony sectlet called the White Panthers managed to collect enough signatures to force a recall election. She took her victory by more than 80 percent as a personal vindication. For San Francisco, she had become a necessity: the straight man to play against, the moderating influence to make it all work, the stately symbol to lend the city legitimacy in the eyes of a country where "San Francisco Democrat" was about to become a Republican epithet loaded with sly innuendo.

In 1984, just before the Democratic convention rolled into town, Walter Mondale interviewed her at length about the vice presidency. He was impressed. His aides carefully checked her background and finances, finding her spotless. But, according to a former Mondale adviser, she carried too many inherent liabilities as a divorced Jewish woman. The candidate passed over her and, in a rush, selected Geraldine Ferraro. History seemed to have sidestepped Feinstein.

When she emerged last year as a candidate for governor, she appeared to have already been eclipsed. In a fit of pique, her longtime political consultant in effect fired her as a candidate, announcing his resignation from the campaign by fax to the press before he informed her. He claimed she lacked a "fire in the belly." She was widely dismissed as lazy, headstrong, and aimless. Then she had a hysterectomy. "I had a fire in the belly," said Feinstein, "and had it removed."

She was far down in the polls and little-known in Southern California. Her opponent was Attorney General John Van De Kamp, a decent and dull man, correct on every liberal issue, endorsed by virtually the entire political establishment in Los Angeles, and firing no one's imagination. The question on which they most sharply divided was capital punishment.

She had reversed her position, coming to believe it was somehow a deterrent, regardless of the overwhelming scholarly evidence to the contrary. Her conviction was apparently rooted in a visceral response to viewing the consequences of gory murders as mayor—she mentions "brain matter all over" a mom and pop store and a five-year-old machine-gunned on his front lawn. But her "toughness" was underscored by her presence at least as much as her revised position. In the television spot that advertised her death penalty stance, she appeared on grainy film announcing the assassination of Moscone. It was war footage, and she was battle-tested.

Van De Kamp countered by asserting his belief against capital punishment while saying he might carry out executions anyway. He was caught between a rock and a soft place. Thus, the gender roles in the primary were reversed. She dominated as the strong and masterful one. In the final tally she won by more than ten points.

She was now thrust in the race against Pete Wilson, another clash of bright primary colors and shades of beige. But the contest between her story and Wilson's lack of one is not merely the unfolding of their personalities.

In the gap between the California of dreams and the California of fact lies the strobe-like history of California politics. Cruel illusion is the greatest factor in these politics. The last thing Californians want is low-key reality; the California dream is to keep dreaming. Just around the corner from Disneyland, however, is the day of the locust—in fact, the Richard M. Nixon Library and Birthplace. California is in a constant state of flux, relentlessly growing bigger, its inherent instability unsettling any momentary balance. There is also a menace amid the palms, a Chinatown going down, unseen actors plotting to gain control of paradise.

Ever since 1910, when the Progressives dynamited

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the smoke-filled room, whoever could lay claim to the franchise of California exceptionalism has had an electric connection to a mythic force that can be turned into political power. The state's important modern governors all rose on that claim: Earl Warren and Pat Brown, Ronald Reagan and Jerry Brown.

By contrast, the two leading figures of California politics in the 1980s—Governor George Deukmejian and Senator Pete Wilson—have been caretakers of the Republican advantage they had ridden into office. The Reagan years in Washington were an interregnum in California. During this period, Deukmejian presided in Sacramento as an ideological conservative who could never approach Reagan in his talent for dramatization.

Wilson's story has been told before. But it is necessarily not about him, because the tale of the Protestant ethic is so generic. It is the Nixon story without all the weird edges and paranoid subtext. Wilson, by all testimony, always wanted to be governor because it was a position he wanted to have. He came from a middle-class background, went to Yale and Boalt Hall, won a seat in the state Assembly, and was elected mayor of prospering San Diego. In 1976 he backed Gerald Ford over Ronald Reagan for the GOP presidential nomination. Two years later Wilson lost the Republican primary for governor. When he wanted to run again in 1982, he was persuaded by the Republican powers that be to run against a weakened Jerry Brown for the Senate. In the Senate, Wilson has been a cipher. He ran an empty re-election campaign against a lame candidate, Lieutenant Governor Leo McCarthy. Wilson's inoffensiveness has been the heart of his appeal.

Wilson was a Bush-type Republican before there was a Bush presidency, a movable Republican. He has a suburban strategy, trying to win over social liberals without significantly alienating the GOP base. Wilson has also edged further away from the conservative line on abortion and environmentalism than Bush. Simply by getting the Republican vote, Wilson may run a tight race. Democratic Party identification in California has dropped from 57 percent at the beginning of the 1980s to 49 percent today, while the Republican partisan attachment has risen from 32 to 40 percent.

Wilson's strategy is to hold his party, moderate his image to draw independents, and tarnish Feinstein's. Going negative is as essential to him as going positive. According to Otto Bos, his campaign director, Wilson will attack Feinstein for her "flip-flop" on the death penalty; for her "taxing and spending" record as the mayor of San Francisco; for the undisclosed investors in her husband's enterprises; for her "extreme" statement in favor of proportionate hiring goals for minorities and women; for her association with Willie Brown, the elegantly attired black Assembly Speaker who has been crucial in her political education. To produce his negative ads, Wilson has retained Larry McCarthy, *auteur* of the infamous Willie Horton spot. Feinstein says, "It will be a Republican campaign: nasty, demeaning, humiliating." Whether negative or positive, Wilson's campaign is all tactics.

The message of Feinstein's campaign is cohering into a classic restatement of California exceptionalism. It is framed by the growing feeling in the state that things are slipping out of control. She sees a fissure in the earth opening up, separating the 1990s from the past. "California," she says, "has grown twice as fast as America. It's due to grow another one-third in size in the next ten to fifteen years. Beginning with Reagan, the philosophy has been 'get government off the backs of people.' Then, with Jerry Brown, it was 'small is beautiful.' With Deukmejian, it was that the economy would take care of all things. The only thing that administration has concentrated on has been prison growth. So the educational system has gone down, the environmental cleanup has languished. . . . It's laissez-faire ideology, Republican ideology. . . . People are now beginning to see the failures. They see it in the lack of attention to the state's infrastructure to accommodate growth, whether that be freeways or transportation systems or schools. There is concern over drinking water, drought, medfly—and no policy. . . . The suburbs are where families get the worst air quality, the worst in America. You grow up down there you have 20 percent less air capacity. . . . People now want a more activist government, an advocacy government."

In the Feinstein campaign research, Wilson appears as too politically motivated. Four focus groups in heavily Republican Orange County had difficulty assigning a rationale to him besides ambition.

And he has another problem. He is the largest recipient of S&L campaign funds of any politician in the country. The fabled Charles Keating of the Lincoln S&L gave him $16,000, which he returned when the press exposed it. The S&L issue plays against a California backdrop. Deukmejian's chief fund-raiser, Karl Samuelian, happens to be Keating's lawyer. And, at his suggestion, Deukmejian appointed two of Samuelian's partners as the top regulators of the state S&L commission, which failed to deal with the massive, still spreading, scandals. Wilson may bear the burden of the GOP incumbency. "The S&L debacle," says Feinstein, "is a case in point of Republican philosophy." The California dream is not being undermined by impersonal forces, in her account, but by deliberate Republican policies. Connect the dots.

Pete Wilson has never before had a difficult opponent. Dianne Feinstein has never faced a situation that was easy. She has overcome all sorts of disorders, political and personal, to confront the disorder in California she charges has been fostered by a long period of Republican rule. The Democrats, however, have been a party on a gradual slide. And yet California is a place where even a party can renew itself. By redefining California exceptionalism, she may rearrange the coordinates of the state's politics. She has emerged in a wrinkle of time in which, despite a thousand variables, her victory may largely depend on her own efforts. •

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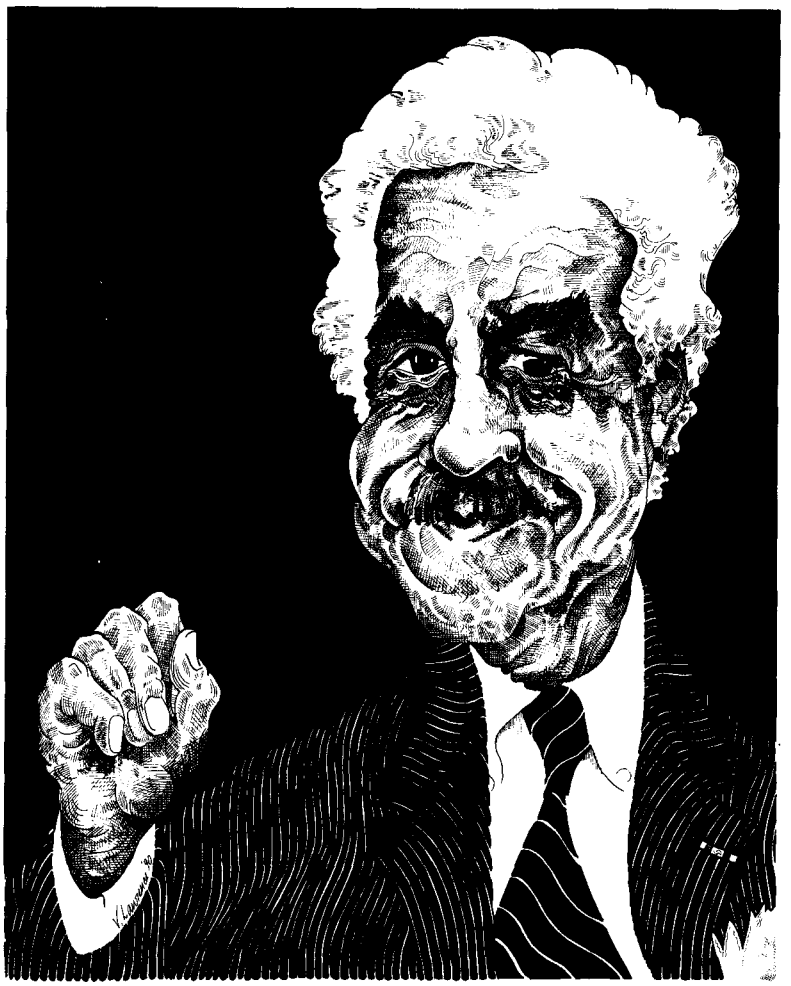
MILD WILDER

By Fred Barnes

Soon after Douglas Wilder was elected lieutenant governor of Virginia in 1985, he was invited to address the Democratic Leadership Council, the moderate group pilloried by detractors as "the white boys' caucus." Wilder not only spurned the invitation, but he also trashed the DLC. (At the time, he was feuding with Charles Robb, the former governor, now senator from Virginia, and a DLC founding father.) Wilder dismissed DLC members as "me too" Democrats bent on promoting "Reaganism with a human face."

In November 1989, the day after Wilder was elected governor, Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia sent him another invitation to speak to the DLC. "Certainly any remarks you want to make will fit in perfectly with our conference theme, 'Toward a Mainstream Agenda,' since your campaign articulated mainstream values in an unusually effective manner," wrote Nunn, the DLC chairman. Wilder immediately telephoned Nunn and accepted. (His feud with Robb was temporarily off.) And his remarks—titled "America's New Mainstream"—fit DLC specifications perfectly. Then last March Wilder addressed the DLC again, boasting that he'd kept the moderate faith as governor by scaling back programs and cutting taxes.



DOUGLAS WILDER BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Wilder's conversion is a political event of the first order. Inescapably, of course, he is cast largely as a symbol: the first black elected governor of any state. This assures him lavish media attention, and he's made the most of it. But this is not what is making him such an influential national politician. What gives Wilder national clout is his passionate embrace of the centrist Democratic agenda. This separates him from other black politicians, even those who belong to the DLC. House Democratic Whip William Gray is a DLC co-chairman, but he's neither an ideological nor a political force in the national party. Wilder is already both. He has a mission. He's enlisted in the crusade to make moderate policies the "New Mainstream" of the Democratic Party.

Win or lose, the arrival of Wilder is the most significant happening in the DLC since its inception in 1984. Executive Director Al From can barely control himself. Wilder gives "extra credibility" to the argument that Democrats should be "socially progressive and fiscally responsible," says From. "People don't expect a black to care about fiscal responsibility." I don't know about that, but From certainly has reason to be giddy. Wilder's emergence as a highly popular moderate is an indication, to me at least, of the DLC's growing strength

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in the fight for ideological dominance of the party.

Wilder matters for two more reasons. He's a new political model for blacks, a gaudy success at getting elected by a majority white constituency. If black candidates want a shot at gaining a substantial chunk of the white vote, they have only to copy Wilder's technique: hug the center and ignore racial issues. They now win practically every election in majority black districts, but redistricting based on the 1990 census won't provide many more. So the logical next step for blacks is to concentrate on races in which a majority of voters are white. The Wilder model offers the best prospect for success. But it doesn't guarantee anything: in Georgia's July 17 Democratic gubernatorial primary, former Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, who ran as a moderate, finished a poor second, barely making the runoff.

For white Democrats, Wilder represents a solution to their Jesse Jackson problem. All conservatives, most moderates, and many liberals are convinced that Jackson and his protest politics are a drag on the party. Yet they won't combat him aggressively for fear of alienating black voters or being called racist. Now there's a black alternative to Jackson, a national politician who'll hog media time from Jackson and zing him as disruptive and too leftist. If Jackson and his supporters demand a black on the national ticket in 1992, Democrats can turn to Wilder, a black who can get white votes.

Don't worry about Wilder's being cynically used by whites. He's a shrewd, manipulative pol who knows exactly what he's doing. He's not passive. "A black man doesn't get to be governor of a Southern state by sitting back and letting the party establishment come to him," says Dwayne Yancey of the *Roanoke Times & World News*, one of three Virginia reporters who've written books about Wilder. He's made a career out of picking fights. He won his first election—to the state Senate in 1969—by maneuvering a more prominent black out of the race. Wilder argued he was the only black who could attract enough white votes to win, and he probably was.

For a politician, Wilder is unusually inner-directed. He's enormously charming, but he's also unafraid to break a little china. The common thread, whether he's courting or fighting, is that Wilder invariably gets what he wants. In 1981 he helped Robb get elected governor, then humiliated him in 1982 by forcing him to abandon support for a prospective Senate candidate Wilder disliked. That was the first episode of a recurring feud. In 1985 he faulted Robb for taking too much credit for Wilder's breakthrough election as lieutenant governor. Robb thought good relations had been restored after he campaigned earnestly for Wilder last year. Instead, Wilder has cut off contact. "I don't get it," Robb told an aide. Wilder and his predecessor as governor, Gerald Baliles, don't talk now either. They once were allies. Wilder helped Baliles win the gubernatorial nomination in 1985, thus assuring Baliles's endorsement of Wilder in 1989. This year Wilder antagonized Baliles by sacking some of his holdover appointments and barring low-number license plates issued by Baliles. Despite the quarrels, Wilder hasn't burned any bridges. If he runs for national office, Robb and Baliles will surely back him.

Wilder was a late bloomer as a moderate. For years he was regarded as the most liberal member of the legislature. (In Virginia a liberal is anyone even marginally left of center.) When I first interviewed Wilder in 1982, he favored Teddy Kennedy for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984. By 1985, when Wilder ran successfully for lieutenant governor, he was talking like a centrist: he endorsed capital punishment, stressed the crime issue, and called for cutting the state sales tax. By 1989 he was a full-blown moderate. If he hadn't been, he'd never have beaten Marshall Coleman for governor. His espousal of centrist policies may not be totally genuine, but it's genuine enough. The best test is whether a candidate gives a rough idea of what he'll do if elected, and then does it. Wilder passed that test. (The other governor elected in 1989, Democrat James Florio of New Jersey, failed this test. He said he wouldn't raise taxes, then did. President Bush failed, too.)

As governor, Wilder has been bolder in taking positions that trumpet the New Mainstream than in producing a comprehensive state program. "You don't need a lot of legislation to govern," he said. He vowed to stick to three simple principles of "prudent" fiscal policy: no general tax hike, no increase in spending from the budget submitted by Baliles, and creation of a reserve in case of a budget shortfall. He also called for elimination of the sales tax on non-prescription drugs, promised to convene a drug summit, and said he'd formally declare the 1990s to be the "Decade of Youth and Families." He achieved everything, but the tax cut won't go into effect until 1992 and the drug summit didn't lead anywhere.

Wilder is not modest. "The skeptics were convinced that my administration would propose massive social programs which would far outstrip current and projected revenues. And yet while the challenges were many as I assumed office, I was never tempted to sway from the values and principles which had persuaded the people to elect me to Virginia's highest office," Wilder told the DLC in March.

He's not lacking in personal ambition either. When the legislature adjourned in early March, Wilder began evangelizing across the country for a centrist Democratic Party. Why begin touring so soon after taking office? Wilder knew he didn't have much time to make a national name for himself. His chief adviser, state Democratic chairman Paul Goldman, told another Democrat that Wilder had to act before the fall election, when Dianne Feinstein, Andy Young, and Harvey Gantt might be elected. They'd steal the spotlight from Wilder. Besides, he's a one-term governor, barred by state law from succeeding himself. "I give Wilder credit," former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt told an associate. "He understood something very important. He was a lame duck the day he got elected." Wilder says he

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has no intention of running for president in 1992, and I don't think he does. But he wants to be a serious player in national politics, one who's well positioned to change his mind and seek the presidential nomination later, or at least get the vice presidential nod.

In speeches and interviews, Wilder is zealous in his fiscal conservatism. He said the budget summit in Washington should concentrate on cutting spending. "I don't like taxes," he told Washington reporters. On foreign policy, he sounds nationalistic. He wants restraints imposed on the export of supercomputers so they don't fall into the hands of enemies. Some people "live for (and will die for) the opportunity to inflict pain and suffering upon the citizens of this nation. Imagine the potential consequences of terrorist groups and states in possession of nuclear warheads and long-range delivery systems." He stopped just short of arguing for deployment of SDI.

Wilder's views have thrilled conservative columnists. Warren Brookes called him "a black Democrat who talks like Ronald Reagan." But Wilder is hardly an ideological conservative. He's a centrist who's figured out that some conservative issues offer fertile ground to plow. So do some liberal issues. He won the governorship (by 7,000 votes out of nearly 2 million cast) by stressing abortion. He's strongly pro-choice and continues to speak fervently against limitations on a woman's right to an abortion. He's appointed more women and blacks to senior posts than any previous Virginia governor. He's ordered state boards and agencies to divest shares in companies with "substantive" ties to South Africa. Wilder was also one of the first Democrats to attack the Bush administration on the savings and loan scandal.

Though Wilder won't acknowledge it, he owes a lot to Jesse Jackson. "If Jackson weren't on the scene, Wilder wouldn't have emerged as much," says the DLC's From. That's putting it mildly. Wilder is all the more interesting, particularly to the press, because of the contrast with Jackson. "Jesse runs to inspire, I run to win," says Wilder. "I've had to campaign and receive votes and then be responsible and show what I could do and establish a record. I'm not an activist." Jackson, he suggests, is a jet-setter. "Jesse is well-traveled, been to places I've never been, met people I'll never meet. I'm more a pedestrian type than a scintillating type or a charismatic type."

The crucial difference between Wilder and Jackson is the race issue. Wilder says he never mentions race, "even in black churches." Jackson presses racial grievances. Wilder asserted in a June speech that the "New Mainstream is not beholden to any special interest. It serves only the rights, the freedoms, and the well-being of every citizen." Jackson treats blacks and other minorities as a special interest of sorts, society's victims. Jackson is a protest candidate, the champion of the underclass. Wilder crafts his appeal chiefly to middle-class voters. Jackson flirts with black rejectionists like Louis Farrakhan and George Stallings. In a speech to the NAACP convention on July 12, Wilder denounced "the rantings of those self-serving rabble-rousers who cynically claim to represent today's black community." And so on.

There's no doubt that many whites are attracted to a black politician whose pitch is non-racial (and non-liberal) and are repelled by one who makes racial demands. The campaigns of Wilder and Jackson are the best evidence of this. Wilder got 41 percent of the white vote last fall, 44 percent in 1985. If Jackson had managed to get 40 percent of the white vote in the 1984 presidential primaries instead of the 14 percent he got, he'd have been the Democratic nominee. Jews and other supporters of Israel have an additional reason for liking Wilder. Wilder defends Israel, and he got a standing ovation in June at a meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "I join with those who believe Jerusalem should be the undivided capital of Israel," he said. He denounced Bush for wavering before cutting off talks with the PLO. Jackson is a friend of PLO chief Yasir Arafat and advocates a Palestinian state. His name is booed at AIPAC meetings.

Jackson sneers occasionally at Wilder's New Mainstream, but he's left sustained criticism to black academics. Ronald Walters, chairman of the political science department at Howard University, insists Wilder's notion of fiscal conservatism nullifies his social liberalism. "If you don't put resources behind your social liberalism, it doesn't amount to much." Robert Smith of San Francisco State suggests in a paper that "pragmatic black crossover" candidates like Wilder are destroying black politics. "Like the transformation of black music, it will be a hollow victory if in order to achieve equitable . . . representation blacks are required to sacrifice their substantive policy agendas," he wrote. "The new black politician would then be a shell of himself, more like a Prince or a Michael Jackson than a B. B. King or a Bobby Bland."

Maybe, but I don't believe Wilder will lose black voters if he runs for president or vice president. (He got 96 percent of the black vote in Virginia last year.) He's got a different problem: Where's the beef? In Virginia he needs a program and a theme, not just a handful of principles. Robb stressed education, Baliles transportation. Since Virginia isn't utopia, there's bound to be something useful for Wilder to focus on. One possibility is the creation of a new Virginia economy to compensate for the inevitable decline of the state's defense industries.

Wilder also needs a more timely national message to continue to draw attention from the press and political community. He has the smarts, skill, and moxie to operate at the national level. But his spiel is perfectly tailored to where the Democratic Party ought to have been in the 1980s, and a lot has happened since 1988—the savings and loan collapse, the fall of communism, the economic slowdown, the rise of Germany. Maybe it's too much to expect a freshly elected governor to have full-blown thoughts on everything. Still, that's expected of influential national politicians. Being Jesse Jackson's foil is nice, but it's not enough. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Midsummer Roundup

Life Is A Long Quiet River (MK2). The title—to assure you quickly—is satirical. This French film is a bit long, but it's far from quiet. With it, Etienne Chatiliez, who has a reputation for doing sly TV commercials, makes his feature debut and shows witty ease.

The script is by Chatiliez and Florence Quentin, and it starts with economical punch. A car is parked in front of a grocery shop, as we see from across the street. The grocer is discussing produce with a customer. Then he and she go into the shop. Then the car explodes. Because of the distance at which Chatiliez has placed the camera and the timing (no one was hurt), we suspect that the explosion is launching a comedy. Chatiliez soon confirms this.

Two families are central to the film, a high-bourgeois group named Le Quesnoy, very proper and very Catholic, and a slothful, casual bunch named Groseille, very improper, who steal and drink and just generally shrug and enjoy themselves. Two other people figure pivotally, a sodden gynecologist and his nursemistress.

After all three groups are established in habits and tone, we learn that, twelve years earlier, the nurse—piqued because her doctor-lover abandoned her on Christmas Eve to go home to his wife—switched name tags on two infants he had just delivered. A Le Quesnoy boy replaced a Groseille girl, and vice versa. Now the nurse reveals the switch, as a further move to gain possession of her doctor-lover (which she does), and the family adjustments between the Le Quesnoys and the Groseilles bring them in uncomfortable contact.

Chatiliez directs with a laconic yet generous style: he moves from one essential to another in a shot, in a scene, yet without any sense of skimpy understatements. He's a discriminating observer; but his very quality as a director leads us to expect more than the film eventually gives us. The restraint with which he satirizes the Le Quesnoys and the wry sympathy with which he treats the Groseilles lead in the end to very little: there's not much resolution in story or theme. If only the medium *were* the message (remember McLuhan?), the film might satisfy—even though it leans on the cliché that families who steal and laze around are always happier than job-holding, square folk.

In a pleasantly competent cast, André Wilms and Hélène Vincent stand out as Father and Mother Le Quesnoy. The doctor is played especially well by Daniel Gélin, who entered films in 1941 and is remembered fondly from such pictures as Ophuls's *La Ronde* and Becker's *Edward and Caroline*.

Ghost (Paramount). This one improves on Shakespeare. The murdered king in *Hamlet* has to hang around in ghostly form until he can persuade his pensive son to avenge his killing. No such circuitous methods here. The murdered man wreaks his own vengeance.

That gimmick is the whole reason for the existence of this picture, hard though it is to believe that producers thought the gimmick strong enough for a whole film. But here it is—screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, direction by Jerry Zucker. (Zucker worked on some smart comic films like *Airplane!* and *Kentucky Fried Movie*. Hard to believe this, too.)

The ghost is played by Patrick Swayze, who can't handle the part; his bereaved girlfriend, Demi Moore, is much better. If it matters. A clairvoyant whom Swayze uses as a contact between worlds is done by Whoopi Goldberg with unremitting sledgehammer touch.

The Adventures of Ford Fairlane (20th Century-Fox). The question that now rives this country from coast to coast is: Did Andrew Dice Clay model his style of delivery on Howard Cosell?

Clay is the stand-up comic who has won renown of a sort with his raunchy language and his derogation of women. Insofar as film permits, which is pretty far these days, he sustains both charges in his first starring film. But it's his delivery that most bemuses; he puts his words on us "as pigeons feed their young" (Shakespeare prefiguring the Cosell manner).

This is another in the line of private-eye spoofs (*Gumshoe*, *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid*, etc.) and might have been amusing if Clay weren't so repellent—personally, before we even get to the outrageous remarks and actions. It might also have helped if the rest of the cast—almost all of them—hadn't mistaken overacting for comic acting.

Clay plays an LA investigator who spe-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cinema Paradiso. *Still widely available, still offering a good rich slice of Sicilian sentiment built on a boy's love for films and the film theater in his hometown. (Reviewed 2/19/90)* **Pretty Woman.** *Julia Roberts's long legs help her up the road to the stardom that her comic charm deserves. Richard Gere partners her well in this pleasing piffle about an LA hooker and a visiting tycoon. (4/16/90)* **Q&A.** *New York from the underside. Sidney Lumet wrote an unoriginal and lumpy script, but he directed it powerfully, with a powerful cast. (5/21/90)* **Without *You* I'm Nothing.** *Full of sneak punches. It starts as a film of Sandra Bernhard's club act—songs and talk—but before long, weird and fascinating overtones come along, in the act and in the filmmaking. Exceptional. (7/2/90)* **—SK**

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cializes in the rock world. (He gets his name from his car. This opens up possibilities. A hero who drinks only one kind of beer, for instance: *The Adventures of Bud Weiser*.) So inevitably we hear lots of rock, which, for all I know, may be good. I hope so; then, if those who know rock see the film, at least the music will please them.

The screenplay, which is not as loony as it ought to be, is by Daniel Waters and James Cappe & David Arnott. The director was Renny Harlin.

Die Hard 2 (20th Century-Fox). The director was Renny Harlin. No, not a typo. This is Bonus Week—two Harlins.

I presumed to see *Die Hard 2* even though I hadn't seen Number One. Still, it's not a sequel, really, it's a quite different adventure. The star once again is Bruce Willis as an LA detective (a public, not private, eye). He's in Washington at Dulles Airport, waiting for his wife's plane on Christmas Eve, when he becomes suspicious of two men, follows them through a service door, and falls into a sinister plot whose complications make the Theory of Relativity look childish. Violence, of course, follows, lashings of it, but violence in films of this kind rarely seems violent to me, or how could so many machine guns fire at the hero without ever nicking him? People get killed, but the Angel of Death is always able to distinguish the subordinate actors from the stars.

By now, most of the killing in pictures of this plentiful kind is mere convention. More shock is conveyed early in *The 39 Steps*, when a woman, just one woman, staggers across Robert Donat's room and falls to reveal a knife in her back, than in all of this carnage carnival.

It's not only that less is more—usually—but that the less in *The 39 Steps* happens to credible people. What Willis goes through in the course of a few hours—fierce beatings, falls, terrific fights, feats of strength—ensures the incredibility of the whole enterprise; it turns the thousands of bullets into blanks.

Harlin, who seemed to have little grip on the light fantastic for *Ford Fairlane*, does much better with straight cornball action. Which, as Hollywood goes these days, means that he'll be working steadily. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

How to 'Serve' Shakespeare

Foul weather rained me out of *The Taming of the Shrew* in Central Park, so I was forced to stay home with a good book. It is one that might interest you as well if you're wondering why Joseph Papp's director, A. J. Antoon, put Kate and Petruchio in the Wild West. The volume is called *On Directing Shakespeare* (Hamish Hamilton) and consists of interviews conducted between 1973 and 1988 with twelve leading Shakespeare directors, many of them notorious for disregarding the place and time of the plays. The interlocutor is Ralph Berry, professor of English at the University of Ottawa. Not only a scholar but a passionate theatergoer, Berry is fascinated by the alchemy with which frozen texts turn into live performance, and has closely followed the fierce storms thundering over the issue of directorial interpretation.

Berry asks each subject, "What is Shakespeare today?"—a question that he says was inspired by a letter to the London *Times* in 1971 in which Jonathan Miller defended Peter Brook's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* against the "Mandarin bardolatry" of its detractors. Miller's challenge—"What does a fairy look like and in what way does his utterance differ from that of ordinary mortals?"—immediately persuaded Berry of the correctness of directorial license. Still, Berry's conversion has not made him doctrinaire. He appeals to radicals and conservatives alike for answers to his query.

On Directing Shakespeare can be considered a companion volume to David Richard Jones's *Great Directors at Work*. (In both books, coincidentally, the introductory essay is more satisfying than the subsequent material.) While Berry is not as fanatical as Jones about the supremacy of the director, he does dispute the purist contention that a text should "speak for itself," a demand he believes is impossible. The icon "Shakespeare" can be considered both a man and a body of work. If a man, he has certain authorial rights and intentions that it is the director's duty to obey and discover. But if Shakespeare is a text, then "we do not serve a man, we excavate or exploit a quarry. The plays cease to be expressions of intention, or attempts at communication; rather, they become material."

The idea that "Shakespeare" is material to excavate rather than a master to serve is inseparable from a belief that the plays are "a massive variable"—many exist in more than one version, most have only the barest stage directions, virtually all are too long to be played in their entirety. The English language, moreover, has changed radically since Shakespeare's day; it therefore becomes a director's obligation to "reactivate" the meaning of the play—not in the manner of a scholar or restorer (what Brook calls the "footnoting attitude"), but in a way that allows the text to absorb the form and pressure of the time.

Berry proposes that every Shakespeare production involves at least three major interpretive acts before rehearsals begin. The first is selecting the play, since choice itself is a directorial statement (for example, doing *Troilus and Cressida* in wartime). The second is cutting the play, for this helps the director decide among the many possibilities Shakespeare includes (whether to do *Henry V* as what Trevor Nunn calls "The National Anthem in five acts," or as, in Michael Bogdanov's words, the "great war play embedded in a greater anti-war play"). And the third is choosing the setting and the period. This last is more than a cosmetic option. It can influence and determine the whole directorial approach. Possibilities are limitless, ranging from period (Peter Hall's *Merchant of Venice*) to modern (Orson Welles's fascist *Julius Caesar*) to period analogue (Miller's *Measure for Measure* set in Freud's Vienna) to an eclectic mix that ranges freely throughout historical time (Bergman's *Hamlet* or Brook's *Lear*).

The twelve directors encountered in this book differ widely in regard to how faithfully they feel obliged to "serve" Shakespeare. On one side is Hall, pugnaciously insisting on uncut plays in Renaissance settings (preferably Caroline). On the other is the deconstructionist Brook, whose attitude toward "serving" is a resounding *non serviam* resembling Lucifer's rejection of God ("there is only one service, which is to the reality which Shakespeare is serving"). Brook, who gives Berry his most provocative and suggestive interview, reveals a Romantic revulsion to any form of artistic obliga-

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tion. He is agonized by the notion that Shakespeare remains our model, believing that each generation must find its own way without reference to traditions. Brook, however, has as much chance of escaping from the embrace of Shakespeare as Jacob from the Angel, which may explain why he describes him in language reminiscent of Northrop Frye's definition of mythic heroes—a figure different not only in quality but in kind: "What he wrote is not interpretation," adds Brook, "it is the thing itself."

But Brook denies that Shakespeare represents a series of messages. He likens the plays rather to tea leaves in a cup. Every observer will perceive the patterns differently—a condition that may have inspired Welles's forlorn remark, "We all betray Shakespeare." The plays are destined to be continually reinterpreted (or betrayed), yet will always remain intact. The real danger to Shakespeare, Brook believes, lies not in misinterpretation so much as in the pedantic impulse to fix him in time: "The great harm done by scholarship is to try to make choices . . . which is what the whole world of footnotes has been. Rather you want endlessly to come back to meeting this vibration in all its fullness and with all the ambiguity of something that does change through the ages."

"I cannot bear people who do Shakespeare with 'concepts,'" says Hall, "They put blinkers on the play." Is this a criticism of his former associate, Brook? No, Brook's Socratic immersion in ambiguities has gradually disabused him of the kind of preconceived ideas he adopted as a wunderkind of nineteen. Now he prefers the ideas evolved by actors during rehearsal. By contrast, some of the conceptual directors Berry interviews—Konrad Swinarski, for example—are as rigid about their ideas as any footnoting scholar. Consider Swinarski's unwittingly funny account of his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, where he interprets Quince's play as an allegory of governmental oppression with the Lion representing federal power and the Wall as the older generation separating the lovers. (The Duke prefers the danced Bergomask to the spoken Epilogue because he is afraid to hear the truth!) Obviously, Shakespearean comedy does not always translate well into Polish.

Still, *On Directing Shakespeare* could have used a few more interviews with non-English directors for the sake of perspective. Giorgio Strehler offers some interesting reflections on Shakespeare's instinctual knowledge of Italy, and Michael Kahn (reflecting the influence of Susan Sontag) suggests an "against interpretation" theory, where characters like Shylock and Portia could express contradictory qualities in successive scenes. But what's missing from the book is the presence of truly radical and unorthodox Shakespeare directors from the continent, such as Ariane Mnouchkine, Ingmar Bergman, and Peter Stein.

In their place, Berry invites (in addition to Miller, Brook, and Hall) the usual suspects from the English theater: Trevor Nunn, Adrian Noble, Robin Phillips, Bil Alexander, and Bogdanov. All have done distinguished work and each demonstrates in passing how a truly careful reading of a play in preparation for production can uncover original insights (as, for example, Noble's perception that, as audiences grew more concerned with the failures of power than with subversive sexuality, the center of gravity in *Measure for Measure* shifted from Angelo to the Duke).

Still, a truly wild card like Declan Donnelan of the British Cheek by Jowl company introduces a frisky, irreverent note that this sober-sided assemblage could use a little more of. ("The most important thing to remember about Shakespeare is that he's dead and we're alive.") Donnelan's concept of Orsino as a raging queen who is actually in love with Viola *as a boy* ("So marriage is going to be some sort of therapy for him. . . ?" asks the straightfaced Professor Berry) could only have been invented by someone with no sanctified feelings whatever about the Bard—or about Art, Religion, or Life, for that matter. Donnelan's single criterion is that something be entertaining ("I'm sure the Crucifixion was entertaining"). His interview is at once the most outrageous and amusing thing in the book.

Obviously, tolerance for directorial license will vary according to the piety with which one regards Shakespeare, and there will always be those who insist that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* can take place only "in a wood near Athens" (actually the addition of an eighteenth-century editor). Hall took "Memorial" out of the name of the Shakespeare theater at Stratford-on-Avon—as Kahn removed "Festival" from the marquee of the Stratford theater in Connecticut—largely in order to relax such starchy attitudes. But let the last words on the subject be those of Jonathan Miller—a man at times as critical of the directorial choices of others as critics are of his:

> I think that fidelity is the job of forgers and of mapmakers, and of engineers and draughtsmen. The job of the artist in the theater is illumination and reconstruction, and the endless task of assimilating the objects of the past into the interests of the present, on the understanding that the physical artifact which is the occasion for such an enterprise will be retained in some place in its original form, so that it is available for anyone who wishes to make a competitive reconstruction of his own.

Only in that way, he implies—only by asking, "What does a fairy look like?"—can Shakespeare be truly "served." •

Only Connect

BY MICHAEL WALZER

Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality by E. J. Hobsbawm

(Cambridge University Press, 200 pp., $19.95)

A year ago Eric Hobsbawm published a collection of his political essays over the last decade called *Politics for a Rational Left*. Reading them, I never doubted that they served the cause of leftist rationality. No one has looked at British politics with a clearer eye. In his critique of Thatcherism, his opposition to the "hard left," his refusal of Labourite sentimentality, his sensible strategic proposals, Hobsbawm has provided a model of intellectual engagement. But rational leftists have always had trouble with nationalism, and this new book is a catalog of Hobsbawm's troubles.

It is organized as a work of historical scholarship, and the survey of nationalist politics since the French Revolution is brilliantly done. Hobsbawm is a master of reference; his narrative is rich with examples drawn from the history of every nation, proto-nation, and

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would-be nation on the European continent. (He has little to say about the rest of the world.) But for reasons that go to the heart of his troubles, he tells no extended stories. His examples are like witnesses at a trial, called to the stand, asked a few questions, hastily dismissed; they are not allowed, as it were, to speak for themselves. This is historical scholarship with a polemical purpose. Hobsbawm wants us to reach a verdict on nationalism: that its program is wrong, its myths dangerous, its reality ugly.

Myth is the dominant idea. The immediate point of Hobsbawm's survey is that the claims that modern nationalists make when they demand statehood and sovereignty are false. Above all, the nation is not an ancient community. Nationalism, according to Hobsbawm, rarely reflects a long-standing tradition or a coherent way of life. Nor is it necessarily founded on a common language, or religion, or ethnicity, or historical experience. All these are more often the result of sovereignty than its reason: they are social artifacts, political constructions. The nation is an imagined (and, what is more, a newly imagined) community.

"Imagined community" is a phrase that Hobsbawm takes from the Cornell anthropologist Benedict Anderson, who, in his own book on nationalism, nowhere used it as a term of disparagement. But Hobsbawm seems to think that imagined communities serve ineffectively and inauthentically "to fill the emotional void left by the retreat or disintegration . . . of *real* human communities" (his italics). What these real communities were he does not tell us, and I have some difficulty imagining them. I can only imagine imagined (not the same as imaginary) communities—Christendom and Islam, say, or ancient Israel and ancient Rome.

Surely the unity of Saxons and Normans, of Scottish clans and Russian villages, was imagined. How could it not be? Except perhaps for mothers and children, there are no natural ties among human beings. Even the family, or at least every particular structure of familial relationships, is imagined. Relationships depend on ideas; relationships *are* ideas. My connection to a blood relative in Miami is no less a function of my imagination than my connection to fellow Americans in Wyoming or fellow Jews in Romania. Saying this does not reduce the force or the value of the connections: I have a rich imagination. So does everybody else.

Hobsbawm assumes the disvalue of imagined communities. That's why he spends so many pages demonstrating that the nation has no consistent origin in *real* communal life. He dispels all the myths, and as a result the phenomena become incomprehensible. Why is the nation such a powerful focus for thoughts and feelings, energy and commitment? At one point in his book, Hobsbawm asks a related question: Why did the left, during and after World War II, make such an effort to appropriate national and patriotic symbols? The point, he says, was "to refuse the devil's armies the monopoly of the best marching tunes." That is nicely put, but why *were* those the best marching tunes, the tunes to which people were most ready to march? This I don't think Hobsbawm ever explains. He writes as if men and women calling themselves nationalists are making a conceptual mistake—misunderstanding what a nation is—or falling into the darkness of unreason. One senses throughout the book that Hobsbawm is irritated by nationalism, like a respectable citizen confronting someone else's bad habits or nervous tics.

He would like to tell us that some group of people (the lower-middle-class intelligentsia is the most likely candidate: journalists, schoolteachers, provincial civil servants) perpetrated nationalism on everyone else. But he is much too good a historian for an argument like that. And so he makes the argument only while warning us against it, as in this discussion of language:

> I do not wish to reduce linguistic nationalism to a question of jobs, as vulgar materialist liberals used to reduce wars to a question of the profits of armaments firms. Nevertheless it cannot be fully understood, and the opposition to it even less, unless we see the vernacular languages as, among other things, a vested interest of the lesser examination-passing classes.

Yes, the lesser examination-passers (note the contempt) are important imaginers of the nation, carriers of nationalist ideology, political construction workers. But what they are able to make depends, in ways that Hobsbawm obscures as often as he clarifies, on what they have to work with. He quotes with approval a line from a nineteenth-century Italian nationalist: "We have made Italy, now we have to make Italians." What Hobsbawm admires here is the frank admission that Italy was first made in the absence of Italians—that is, of a unified ethnic and linguistic group with a singular history. But this is a half-truth, as we can see if we reflect on how

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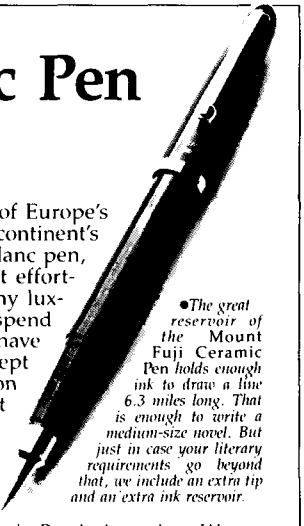

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much easier it was to make Italians out of Neapolitans, Romans, and Milanese than out of Libyans and Ethiopians.

Nations are imagined communities constructed out of the remains of earlier imagined communities. The construction is partly political, therefore coercive, but it is easier or harder, more coercive or less coercive, depending on what we might think of as the nearness of the old and new imaginings. Machiavelli, one of the early imaginers of the Italian nation, has a nice image in *The Prince* of one political change leaving a "toothing-stone" for the next: a point of possible connection. Previous political changes, up and down the peninsula, had left their toothing-stones for Italian nationalism. Had they not done that, there would never have been an Italian nation but some other, or several others. These connections to the past don't make Italian nationalism real in Hobsbawm's sense, but they do explain why we are inclined to regard it as a legitimate politics, whereas the effort to make Italians out of Libyans or Frenchmen out of Algerians was illegitimate.

Hobsbawm never asks why people think of themselves as members of a community. He tells us more than once that imagining a nation is mostly a matter of reaction and resentment, a response to imperial domination, foreign threat, or immigrant pressure. Half-true, again; but the persistence of these imaginings, across a variety of kinds of communities, suggests something deeper. Deeper, but also very simple: there is, I think, a fairly ordinary human desire to live in a familiar world with known others, and to establish some sort of continuity over the generations ("between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born," as Edmund Burke wrote). The forms of the familiarity vary a great deal. Even modern nations, with their interchangeable ideologies, are variously constructed out of ethnic, linguistic, religious, and historical commonalities. There is no pattern, as Hobsbawm amply demonstrates. Any given common feature may or may not make for nationalist imaginings. Particular imaginings may or may not express themselves in a successful, let alone an attractive, politics.

Old and new communities have been under stress for a long time now. Economic mobilizations, mass migrations, and large-scale warfare have thrust masses of men and women into unfamiliar worlds where they find no toothing-stones, no easy connection. The people upon whom they have been thrust respond to the newcomers, often enough, with fear and hostility. For these (and other) reasons, nationalist politics often turns ugly, much like religious politics and class politics in similar circumstances.

Hobsbawm makes nationalism ugly by definition, for he holds that its central principle is that duty to the nation overrides every other political and moral duty. (Hence committed nationalists can never be trusted to write the history of their own nation: they will tell the truth only when its suits their purposes. He himself, Hobsbawm assures us, suffers from no such disability.) But this is like saying that the central principle of individualism is that the self always takes precedence over the other. Individualism is egotism. Nationalism is chauvinism. Why does our language have different words for such singular phenomena? In fact, the second term in both these false equations expresses a possibility, perhaps a tendency, but not an identity. It is important to recognize exactly when nationalism turns into chauvinism and under what conditions—so that we can try to avoid the transition or reverse it. Assume the identity and there is nothing to do with all the perverse men and women who think of themselves as members of a nation.

This assumption of perversity leads Hobsbawm into a strange argument about recent events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. "We can now see in melancholy retrospect," he writes, that "it was the great achievement of the Communist regimes in multinational countries to limit the disastrous effects of nationalism within them." On his own reading, the right verb here is probably "postpone" rather than "limit." But at what price was this postponement won? A price worth paying, he seems to suggest: "The 'discrimination' or even 'oppression' against which champions of various Soviet nationalities abroad protest is far less than the expected consequences of the withdrawal of Soviet power." To this sentence he attaches a note saying that it is not to be read, as it easily might be, "as condoning the mass transfer of entire populations on the grounds of their nationality." But if he acknowledges the brutality of the Stalinist transfers, he ought to take "oppression" out of inverted commas: it was real enough. Where are the Lithuanian or Armenian nationalists who have anything like that in mind?

Despite these grim expectations, Hobsbawm is remarkably optimistic about the future—and remarkably confident about his own ability to read the future. Nationalism "is no longer a major vector of historical development." History is still, it seems, on the side of moral and political progress. We are well on our way to a supranational, even a global, society and economy. There will be many years still of nationalist resistance and adaptation; nations and ethnic-linguistic groups may even flourish "locally," though now in "subordinate and . . . minor roles." National identity will continue to be one (but only one among many) of the ways in which people imagine and describe themselves. But all this is somehow trivial when set against the overriding certainty of decline.

Since I have no similar knowledge of the future, I cannot say yes or no to this prognosis. But even if Hobsbawm is right about world politics, he is wrong about the relative importance of nationalist resistance, local flourishing, and imagined identities. He is making a mistake characteristic of rational leftism, a mistake that has done a lot of damage on the left generally. We can see the mistake at work in the radical critique of "consumerism," as if it were not a good thing for ordinary men and women to possess useful and beautiful objects (as the rich and the powerful have always done). When possession becomes the sole end of their existence, there is something to criticize; but we need to mark off that moment from all previous moments of innocent desire and acquisition.

Hobsbawm expresses a similar disdain for the ordinary in his critique of nationalism—as if the forms of human fellowship are not of vital and permanent importance. When fellowship (of any sort) becomes exclusive, paranoid, and aggressive, there is something to criticize. But we have to be able to recognize value short of that. Indeed, the chief reason to criticize and oppose the aggression of this or that nation is to protect the other nations who are threatened or injured by it.

Globalism will never be politically attractive if it does not allow for the local flourishing of imagined communities. This globalism is not a minor matter; nor will it be easy. Hobsbawm is at his formidable best when he argues for the difficulty. "A world of nations cannot exist," he says, "only a world where some potential national groups . . . exclude others." Given the scope of international migration and the mixing of peoples, this may well be right. We can nonetheless work toward the least possible exclusion. We can experiment with political regimes that provide some overarching protection while still accommodating difference. Here, whatever the world-historical drift, is an appropriate agenda for a rational left. •

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The Arrogance of History

BY EUGENE GENOVESE

The Arrogance of Faith: Christianity and Race in America from the Colonial Era to the Twentieth Century by Forrest G. Wood

(Knopf, 517 pp., $29.95)

In launching an ultimately successful crusade, the abolitionists assaulted a social relation that had been ubiquitous in world history and continued to infect every corner of the earth during much of the nineteenth century. Wherever slavery could be found, the dominant religions accepted it as part of the social order. Only in the West did a great movement arise to assert everyman's right to freedom, and it arose primarily on Christian foundations. Notwithstanding the centuries-long complicity of the Christian churches in slavery, the abolitionists were able to mount an ideological challenge based on Christian theology. They advanced a doctrine of individual freedom through the assertion of the immortality of the soul, and the view of sin as an offense against God, not merely against the community of men. Not always skillfully or honestly, the abolitionists interpreted the Bible as anti-slavery, and we may thank God and the big battalions that, whatever their sins against intellectual integrity, they prevailed.

The slaveholders and their theologically conservative allies fought back, citing chapter and verse to prove that slavery was divinely ordained. Those who think that the Word of God, as manifested in the Bible, ought to mean what it says must give the defenders of slavery high marks for learned, sometimes brilliant argumentation in a ghastly cause. If the devil was quoting the Scriptures, he was doing so depressingly well. Fortunately, learned discourse counts for much less in historical crises than intellectuals prefer to think, and the slaveholders went down to a deserved and overdue defeat.

Under the circumstances, we should expect a book on the historical relation of Christianity to slavery and racism to file an indictment against the churches for their long complicity with slavery. Forrest Wood opens his new book with a discussion of Christianity's historical engagement with slavery and racism, and proceeds to his main subject, the Christian experience in the United States and especially in the South. Accordingly, we might have hoped for a solid synthesis that could steel us for battle against today's resurgent racism.

Alas, we are living in interesting times, in which ideological outrages in ostensibly good causes are becoming a way of life in academia. William Bennett deserves to have his knuckles bloodied for his sadly un-Burkean defense of a narrow and bigoted literary canon, but he deserves gratitude for his blunt and accurate definition of the central issue, for telling a truth that few want to hear: that those who today are attacking the canon have no interest in reforming it to include the great black, female, and other voices ignorantly and maliciously excluded from it, that they are not so much attacking Western Civilization courses as Western civilization, and dishonestly.

In *The Arrogance of Faith*, Wood files an indictment not merely against the principal Christian churches, which have a lot to answer for, but against Christianity itself. "The central thesis of this book," he writes, "is that Christianity, in the five centuries since its message was first carried to the peoples of the New World—and, in particular, to the natives and the transplanted Africans of English North America and the United States—has been fundamentally racist in its ideology, organization, and practice." Wood claims originality for his thesis, which is that the Christian churches provided politically valuable rationalizations for slavery, racism, colonialism, and imperialism.

Never mind that the story has been told well and often. More to the point, he goes to great lengths to try to show what he palpably cannot show: that Christianity and Western civilization indulged in horrors that other religions and civilizations would never have dreamed of. All that he does show (and it will not come as news) is that the great technological, economic, and military breakthroughs, the commercial and industrial revolutions that made world conquest possible, came in Christian countries, and with much church support. That rival religions would not have accommodated a Chinese, Indian, Zulu, or Malaysian conquest of the world may nonetheless be doubted.

Wood tries to cover his tracks by writing that "one can never be sure if Hinduism, confronted by the irresistible lure of capital and power, would have compromised its fundamental integrity, because it was never in a position to do so." The periodic bloodletting of Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists in Southeast Asia might invite a speculation, but no matter. The rhetorical burden of this book, and much of its craftily ambiguous argumentation, is nothing if not a condemnation of Christianity as a faith especially oriented toward racism, slavery, imperialism, and mass murder. For Wood, instead of quitting while ahead, or at least while he is within the realm of plausibility, adds to his remarks about the last five centuries: "But one can say that, good works notwithstanding, there has been no greater religious force in the dehumanization of humans than Christianity, the self-proclaimed religion of peace, brotherly love, and fellowship."

In the end, then, Christianity and the West stand condemned as the great enemy of the world's peoples, whose traditions ostensibly have been more freedom-loving and less ethnocentric and arrogant. If that is so, we need to be told the reasons that those very peoples look to the political theories and the institutions of the West every time they raise the banner of freedom against tyranny. No wonder that Western Civilization courses are in disrepute among the enemies of Western civilization: if taught with a modicum of honesty, those courses could hardly deny that the very concept of individual freedom, as generally understood and cherished even by our noisiest radicals, arose in the West on Christian foundations. They could not deny, that is, what Wood labors to obscure in his muddled excursions into theology, that Christian doctrines provided the moral ground on which the exponents of a doctrine of freedom could stand.

The romance with the Third World generates its own problems. Wood squirms on Islam, as on much else, for he must explain the racist and oppressive features of non-Christian religions while underscoring his judgment that, for savagery, Christianity remains in a class by itself. The Muslims, we are told, "eschewed forced conversions and the persecution of religious dissent" in their great jihads and territorial expansion. Christians and Jews who refused to convert "only had to pay higher taxes." That the laying of tribute on whole communities qualifies as a bagatelle may be questioned, but let's not quibble. Still, there was a third "choice" offered, which Wood forgets to mention: those who re-

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fused to convert or to pay tribute were, in the language of the day, put to the sword.

Wood pursues his theme of a gentler slavery in Islam in his customary fashion. He admits that racism also emerged in Islam, but he gives it short shrift. He notes that manumission rates in Islamic countries were higher than in Christian countries. (A more appropriate comparison would be between the plantation regions of both sets of countries.) And he acidly refers to "the American situation, first established by the law of the Southern colonies, where children always assumed the status of the mother." Those awful Christians again. And no matter that they were following not canon law, but the precedent of pre-Christian Roman law. Well, almost no matter. For what are we to make of Wood's remark that "English North Americans embraced slavery *because* they were Christians, not in spite of it"? (The emphasis is his.) Perhaps Wood does make a just claim for originality. I myself had not been aware that the English colonists embraced slavery either because or in spite of their having been Christians.

Wood advances some strange notions in a constant conflation of intent and result. Thus he writes of the missionary work among Africans:

> Whether or not the Christian realized he was disrupting traditional life was probably irrelevant because he almost certainly would not have cared anyway. The dogmatic mind claimed exclusive access to the truth and thus was inherently incapable of compromising because it saw no reason to.

I have read the history of the Jesuits differently. For that matter, though I gag on having to say a good word about Protestant missionaries, I must confess to having read their history differently, too.

The history of the Christian missions has not been glorious, and a harsh judgment may be rendered on much of it. But it has been a complex terrain of struggle among warring tendencies within the churches themselves, and that part of the story must be told if we are ever to understand the continued power of Christianity among decolonized peoples. Wood's historical method is typified by his observation, "If anyone needs a vivid lesson in the expansive power of Christianity, he has only to reflect on the fact that on the eve of the twenty-first century the largest Roman Catholic edifice in the world is in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast." Yes indeed, we should reflect. But it would be useful for reflection to know also that a secular African national government built the church to celebrate its own glory, and that it did so over the protests of the Catholic Church, which thought that the money would be better invested in economic development and in relief for the poor.

In advancing his claims to originality, Wood does love to pour it on. He finds Reinhold Niebuhr guilty of "pontification"; he dismisses William Jennings Bryan as "the Bible-thumping populist from Nebraska"; and he slyly files a blatantly stupid suggestion of racism—or does he mean "insensitivity"?—against David Brion Davis, the greatest living historian of slavery, whose monumental scholarship breathes an unrelenting hostility to racism in every form. Presumably, a man who loves to pour it on may be expected to respond with a good-humored chuckle when some of it gets poured back.

Historians, in reviewing each other's books, often pass lightly over factual errors. I know I do. A law of self-preservation operates here. I have never read—or written—a book that does not contain embarrassing errors, some of them really dumb. Self-interest aside, compassion for human frailty, common decency, and a sense of humor intervene to temper justice with mercy. The unwritten rules of our profession require that we point out only those errors that undermine the author's thesis, or that, when taken together, undermine confidence in his competence. Still, when many of the errors are howlers that make us wonder if he knows his subject at all, even the most merciful reviewer cannot pass lightly without prostituting himself.

For a start, Wood's paraphrase of documents and secondary works cannot be trusted, especially on the numerous occasions when he writes the words "of course" and "in other words." For a typical illustration, turn to page 43:

> Shortly before the Civil War the Rev. B. M. Palmer claimed that God had entrusted the black race to the care of the white—a "trust providentially committed to us"—which meant that the South was obliged to "*conserve and to perpetuate the institution of slavery as now existing.*"

The Rev. Palmer was indeed an important man, worthy of our attention. Pastor of the Presbyterian church in New Orleans, Palmer ranked among the South's best-known and most respected divines, and the widely circulated published version of his famous fire-eating sermon set the Southwest ablaze for the secessionists.

Wood interprets Palmer's words and those of other leading divines as advocating the permanent enslavement of blacks by divine command. That interpretation lies at the heart of Wood's subsequent discussion of the mythic sin of Ham. The problem, however, is that neither Palmer nor many other leading Southern divines preached such a message. Quite the contrary. Led by James Henley Thornwell of South Carolina, Palmer's mentor and the acknowledged giant of the Southern clergy, they preached a doctrine of ultimate deliverance under Christian tutelage. (How effectively or even honestly they preached it is another question.) Wood does not tell his readers what he ought to know if he read the books he claims to have read: that members of Palmer's slaveholding congregation, who knew their Bible, challenged him to clarify his meaning on that very point. He replied by emphatically repudiating the imputation made by some of them, and repeated by Wood.

Or consider page 267, where Wood excoriates Calvinist doctrine: "In other words, it was through commitment to Christ, economic abundance, and purity in conduct that one was assured of election. Hard work (the Protestant ethic) and clean mind (Puritan morality) were tickets to salvation." My first thought was that Wood was confusing John Calvin and James Henley Thornwell with Oral Roberts, but I reminded myself that I could not be right, since Roberts is not a Calvinist. Then, still rubbing my eyes, I noticed that Wood's text and footnotes refer to Paul Tillich, not to Calvin or American Calvinists. The problems I have with Tillich's theology notwithstanding, I could not recall his ever having peddled such rubbish, so I went back to his *History of Christian Thought*, which Wood cites. No. Whatever one may think of Tillich's critique of Calvinism, it never descends to the gross caricature that Wood attributes to him.

Yet this gaffe, too, does not much matter. For Wood goes after Calvinism and the Calvinists hammer and thong, giving the impression, as many historians are fond of doing, that the Old South wallowed in predestinarianism. Wood and these other historians seem not to notice, or not to reflect upon, what they sometimes notice in passing, that the Arminian and harshly anti-Calvinist Methodists emerged as the strongest contingent in the slaveholding South. They seem also not to notice that the Baptists, as well as the adherents of other denominations, were in steady retreat from predestinarianism, and that the Methodists joyfully and justly were celebrating the victory of their Arminian doctrines of free will and salvation for all repentant sinners. Wood might profit from reading the theological works of Thornwell, the most intransigent spokesman for the Southern Old School Presbyterians, for even there one finds some surprising concessions.

The list of howlers in this book is

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daunting. On page 363, Wood describes Daniel O'Connell, the great leader of the Irish emancipation movement, as an Irish-American. On page 87, he denounces the Northern divines for being racists and soft on slavery and cites two cases as representative, describing Frederick A. Ross as "a prominent Northern Presbyterian minister." A good choice, up to a point, for Ross certainly was a prominent figure, important enough to draw fire from Abraham Lincoln and praise from Andrew Johnson. But a Northerner he was not. The son of a slaveholding planter, he was born and raised in Virginia and served as pastor in Tennessee and Alabama.

But it is another of Wood's attributions that ranks as my favorite. Wood goes on for pages in a pompous and biased assault on the Roman Catholic Church's complex engagement with slavery and racism. It is a story that has been much better told by any number of others, including some fine Catholic historians who have not shrunk from exposing their church's worst features. The measure of Wood's own account may be taken from his singling out of several bishops as particular culprits, among them George Foster Pierce of Georgia. Again, Pierce does deserve close attention. He was an influential figure in political life as well as religious life in the Southeast, and for good measure he served for a while in Macon as president of the Georgia Female College.

After a few years Georgia Female College was transformed into Wesleyan Female College. The name might have made Wood thoughtful. As far as I know, the Catholic Church, even in our own ecumenical times, does not name its colleges after John Wesley. And Pierce was the son of the Rev. Lovick Pierce, as Wood should know, since virtually all the relevant sources mention both father and son. The curiosity of an allegedly Roman Catholic bishop's having a reverend for a father might also have made Wood thoughtful, but it did not. In any case, George Foster Pierce did indeed rise to become a bishop of his, and his father's, church: the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Time and again Wood leaves his readers with ideologically loaded false impressions. Thus he implies that the Southern divines, in defending slavery, defended the African slave trade. In fact, the great majority of the leading divines opposed it vigorously. Wood here conflates two separate issues: their speculations on God's providence in having allowed the original slave trade, and their theological and political response to the demands to reopen it. Or to take an even more flagrant example, Wood claims that the pro-slavery divines could only make a scriptural case "by ignoring certain important features of Old Testament slavery." He then refers to the six-year limit on the servitude of fellow Jews in ancient Israel and to related matters that, in fact, the divines discussed in sermon after sermon, pamphlet after pamphlet.

Wood's attempts to intervene in the disputes over the meaning of biblical texts are generally embarrassing. Especially so is his discussion of the Golden Rule, which both pro-slavery and abolitionist writers invoked. He caricatures the pro-slavery argument and misses its main point: if, as the abolitionists alleged, the Golden Rule condemned slavery on the grounds that no one would want to be treated as a slave, then it must have condemned, by extension, virtually all forms of subordination and authority. Do you, then, the pro-slavery divines asked, mean to invoke the Bible in the manner of the few confessed anarchists in your ranks, whom most of you denounce as infidels and Jacobins? In such terms did the Southern divines link the defense of slavery to the defense of all social order and to Christian principle itself.

We may, if we wish, judge their arguments morally odious and politically unacceptable. But, contrary to Wood's superficial polemics, intellectually contemptible they were not. Indeed, the Southern divines' powerful case proved politically and ideologically irresistible in the deeply religious South. The Southern people read their Bible and earnestly sought God's sanction for their social and political relations. The tragedy of the divine's performance resulted not, as Wood would have us believe, from its intellectual shoddiness but, to the contrary, from its impressive intellectual force in defense of a towering social evil.

For an index to Wood's polemical style, turn to his discussion of Thornwell's view of the Golden Rule. He refers to Thornwell's having written that under the Golden Rule a master must treat his slave as he would feel he ought to be treated if legitimately enslaved. Wood comments: "Apparently it never occurred to Thornwell—or he never publicly acknowledged it—that the *first* thing he would 'feel that he ought' to receive if he were enslaved would be his freedom." But that question certainly did occur to Thornwell, who went to considerable lengths to establish the legitimacy of enslavement (of whites as well as blacks) and therefore the illegitimacy of the complaint. And so did Ross, Thornton Stringfellow, George Arm-

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strong, T. R. R. Cobb, John Fletcher, and numerous other pro-slavery writers, clerical and lay. They cannot be fairly accused, at least not by anyone who reads them, of an unwillingness to reply to arguments that they met head-on and at great length.

Thornwell—"the Calhoun of the Church," as he was called—was a great man who, according to his understanding of the light that God had given him, lived and spent his last breath in an unrelenting struggle to save men's souls and uphold a proper Christian social order. However unworthy the social cause to which he devoted his extraordinary talent, he scorned to indulge in evasions in his carefully honed sermons and discourses, which may be read even now for their penetrating insights into psychology, sociology, and education, as well as theology and ecclesiology. But one claim for Thornwell even his most ardent admirers have never made, and it is the very claim that Wood does make. By no stretch of the imagination can Thornwell be called "the real leader of American Presbyterianism." Perhaps he deserved to be called that, but just about every Presbyterian divine north of the Mason-Dixon Line would have roared with laughter at the assertion. Wood is here quoting Alice Felt Tyler's generally useful *Freedom's Ferment*, and we should be grateful that he quotes no further from her short paragraph on the Presbyterians in the sectional crisis, for it is riddled with errors that would be spotted immediately by anyone who has read the relevant works in Wood's bibliography.

The editors of this magazine grumpily refuse to provide the space in which to chronicle sundry other atrocities, gems such as the grave warning that churches that refuse to ordain women thereby expose themselves as racist. This dreadful book should be taken seriously, in any event, as a sign of the times in academia and at our most distinguished publishing houses. It appears that anything that comes with a cri de coeur for the poor, the oppressed, and the downtrodden passes muster and may expect to be greeted with hosannas, and never mind how absurd the arguments and how blundering the scholarship. *The Arrogance of Faith* is, in its own way, an important event: it stands as a testimonial to the standards that have been reigning in the historical profession since its establishment capitulated to the demands for political and ideological conformity that were introduced by the McCarthyites of the 1950s and have been carried forward by radical leftists ever since.

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The Administering Angel

BY DAVID CANNADINE

Ever Yours, Florence Nightingale: Selected Letters edited by Martha Vicinus and Bea Nergaard

(Harvard University Press, 480 pp., $29.95)

The obverse side of the British ten pound note depicts one of the most virtuous countenances and heart-warming tableaux in modern British history. The face is that of Florence Nightingale, a lady of high social station, and the very incarnation of modest female virtue, exuding Christian philanthropy and pious humanitarianism from every pore. The scene is a ward in the military hospital in Scutari, near Constantinople, through which Florence glides in the evening, an angel of mercy with a lighted lamp in her hand, bringing hope and encouragement, comfort and reassurance, to British soldiers wounded or sickened during the Crimean War.

In a conflict that saw much death but little glory, Nightingale's legendary nursing achievements soon established her as a popular heroine, a secular (and spinsterly) saint. For the rest of her very long life, her reputation for greatness and goodness, for courage and compassion was beyond reproach. Peers and Cabinet ministers sought her advice, and ordinary soldiers worshiped the very ground she walked on. To this day she remains, in the company of those three indomitable sovereigns, Boudicca, Elizabeth I, and Victoria, the most famous English woman ever to have lived. (Margaret Thatcher, who in significant ways closely resembles Florence Nightingale, is not yet eligible for membership in this very exclusive ladies' club.)

But as well-informed contemporaries were vividly aware, there was always much more to Nightingale than the "Lady with the Lamp" of popular legend and national iconography. She did not achieve all that she did by force of simple goodness alone. Sir Edward Cooke's two-volume official life, published in 1913, soon after her death, was tactful and eulogistic in tone. But it was also much more probing and perceptive than the average Victorian hagiography. In chapters with such titles as "The Ministering Angel," "The Soldier's Friend," "The Hospital Reformer," and "The Popular Heroine," Cooke paid ample and appreciative tribute to Nightingale's work in the Crimea, in India, in the improvement of the sanitary conditions of the British army, and in the creation and establishment of the modern nursing profession. But he also described her lengthy and bitter struggles with her parents and her sister, drew attention to the ambitious and dominating side of her personality, discussed her deliberate and calculated decision not to marry, admitted her unfeeling and cavalier treatment of friends and protégés, and even delicately hinted at the unfulfilled sexual longings that she could only assuage by her public life of ceaseless and restless activity.

Fifteen years later, heavily (and appreciatively) indebted to Cooke's books, Lytton Strachey unfurled his witty, wicked, and withering attack on Nightingale in the pages of *Eminent Victorians*. Of course, there were some things about Nightingale that Strachey genuinely admired: her determination to cut herself free from family ties and make her own way in the world; her active and practical sympathy for the ordinary British soldier; her stamina and her strength; her reforming zeal and her crusading ardor. But in general he found the myth and the matron equally unpalatable. The fact that acquisitive, hard-nosed Victorians had chosen to idolize this legendary humanitarian was merely further proof of their own conscience-salving hypocrisy.

For all her active goodness, Nightingale herself was far from being the angelic figure of popular adulation. According to Strachey, she was a self-righteous, domineering amazon, who was ruthless in her compassion, merciless in her philanthropy, destructive in her friendships, obsessional in her lust for power, and demonic in her saintliness. Above all, Strachey disliked her because in her frigid indifference to intimate relationships, in her determined suppression of her own erotic impulses, in her lifelong virginity and her unregretted childlessness, she denied her own womanhood, and thus rejected in her self the very humanity she claimed to be serving.

For nearly a generation, Strachey's attack went unanswered, and when a reply

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was finally made it was decidedly muted in tone. In 1950 Cecil Woodham-Smith published the first full-length biography since Cooke, which provided, she claimed, "a complete picture of Miss Nightingale." She enjoyed access to an abundance of documentary material that had been denied to Cooke. She was concerned neither with defense nor with prosecution, but with the re-creation of a personality. And she brought out, as never before, the full extent of Nightingale's inner conflict and her conflict with her family.

Although the book was widely praised as an outstanding example of literary biography, it failed to answer the criticisms that Strachey had made so compellingly, and it was severely attacked for its widespread errors of fact and interpretation. Many of the letters quoted were sloppily transcribed or incorrectly dated. Despite the new material, her biography was excessively—and ungratefully—dependent on Cooke's earlier work. And in her analysis of Nightingale's antagonists—among her own family, in the Crimean War, and in Parliament and Whitehall—Woodham-Smith conspicuously failed to do adequate justice to the characters or the arguments of Nightingale's contemporary critics.

Thirty years later F. B. Smith launched another assault in *Florence Nightingale: Reputation and Power*, a polemic so forceful and so ferocious that even Strachey's mocking essay seemed almost bland and benevolent by comparison. The essence of his argument was that Nightingale may have done good deeds (something he was in fact only very grudgingly prepared to admit), but that did not necessarily mean that she was herself a good woman. Instead, he depicted her as a cheat, a liar, a bully, a monster, and a confidence trickster.

Despite her claims to the contrary, she treated her family far more harshly, ungratefully, and unsympathetically than they ever treated her. She was condescending toward the sick, disloyal in her friendships, manipulating in her dealings with officialdom, voracious in her drive for power and fame. She wrote letters that were full of lies, threats, and half-truths. She deliberately and consistently falsified the historical record to her own glory and advantage. And yet, like Richard Nixon (the comparison is Smith's), she was so self-obsessed that she could not bring herself to destroy the mass of evidence that, sooner or later, was bound to incriminate her.

Clearly, the final verdict is not yet in on Florence Nightingale. Opinions about her remain as varied as her own many-sided personality, and the full harvest from her voluminous and revealing correspondence has yet to be garnered, let alone interpreted by a professional historian or biographer. Meanwhile, Martha Vicinus and Bea Nergaard's selected edition of her letters (fewer than 200 out of a total of nearly 14,000) is much to be welcomed as an interim exercise in re-evaluation and a partial attempt at rehabilitation. It lets Nightingale speak for herself once again, with all the force and the vigor of her superbly assured prose. It shows how gifted she was as a maker of phrases, as a master of detail, as an advocate and critic. It demonstrates her incomparable abilities as a crusader and reformer: denouncing abuses, assailing officialdom, propounding remedies, enlisting support, defining objectives, carrying the day. It illustrates the perennial conflict that raged within her between the calls of private life and the claims of public duty. It vividly reveals her ambiguous attitudes to her own sex, and to the liberation of women. And it makes her a more credible, and also a much more complex, historical personality than she has ever been before.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Nightingale was born in 1820, in extremely advantageous circumstances. Her parents were upwardly mobile members of the middle class, comfortably established among the landed gentry, and through an extended circle of family and friends, she was unusually well connected, both with the traditional territorial aristocracy and with the Liberal-intellectual bourgeoisie. Thanks to her father, she was also uncommonly well educated, in Greek and Latin, French, German, and Italian, history, philosophy, and mathematics. As a young lady, her outer life was identical to that of any woman of her class: family visits, social gatherings, foreign travel, and mild flirtations. Inwardly, however, she craved "a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my faculties."

In 1844 she decided that, in order to do God's will, she must devote her whole life to nursing the sick. Her parents and elder sister were appalled, and for nearly ten years her relations with her family were strained and bitter. Eventually, in 1852, her father capitulated, granted Florence an allowance of £500 a year, and consented to her becoming the superintendent of the Harley Street Hospital for Gentlewomen. During the next two years, she obtained her only firsthand nursing experience of any length, and also discovered a passion for management and reform, for intrigue and manipulation, that never left her.

But it was the Crimean War that unexpectedly provided Nightingale with an arena appropriate to her accomplishments and ambitions. Thanks to her friendship with Sidney Herbert, then secretary at war, she was allowed to lead a private expedition of nurses to treat the

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suffering British troops. And there was much for her to do. The military administration was chaotic; the hospitals were unsanitary and inadequately supplied; and more soldiers were dying from disease than from fighting. For nearly two years, she worked night and day to improve the lot of "my poor men."

The administration was reformed and the hospitals were cleaned. The food was improved and drunkenness among the patients reduced. The quality of the nursing was immeasurably enhanced. And the death rate fell dramatically. Inevitably, though, Nightingale made many enemies. She would not acknowledge those nurses who were not directly under her control. There were endless squabbles with military officialdom about jurisdiction and authority. She needlessly antagonized Dr. Hall, the inspector general of hospitals in the Crimea. And she even subjected Herbert to frequent scoldings and denunciations by mail. As Nightingale once candidly admitted, "I am not a lamb—far from it."

In 1856 she returned to England, exhausted from the accumulated strain and overwork. Her family threatened to engulf her again, and only by becoming a full-time invalid could she keep them at bay, and devote herself to her duty. For she had been haunted by the specter of those who had died from preventable diseases rather than war wounds, and now resolved to embark on a career as a sanitary reformer. Her national prestige was unrivaled, and she enjoyed the support of Queen Victoria, the prince consort, and the prime minister, Lord Palmerston.

She bullied the government into setting up a Royal Commission into the Health of the Army, and although she did not sit on it, she was its most influential (if unofficial) member. It was chaired by Herbert, she herself provided the most important evidence, and together with Herbert she wrote the final report. It recommended widespread changes in the administration of the Army Medical Department; it proposed drastic reforms in the construction and superintendence of barracks and military hospitals; and it urged the establishment of an Army Medical School. Nightingale at once set out to ensure that these recommendations were accepted, and scarcely noticed that Herbert was collapsing under the strain. He died in 1861.

By then she had moved on to bigger and greater things. It was but a step from reforming the sanitary conditions of the British army at home to reforming the sanitary conditions of the British army in India. And that task could not be undertaken in isolation: the whole of the subcontinent would have to be investigated and improved. The result was a second royal commission, which she again dominated from behind the scenes. Once more, she produced a sweeping program of recommendations: barracks and hospitals must be rebuilt and reformed; there must be proper supplies of water and adequate drainage; there must be irrigation schemes across the length and breadth of the country; and a comprehensive system of sanitary administration must be established.

For the rest of her life, India remained an obsession. She was a tireless collector of information about the country, and she corresponded exhaustively with viceroys, provincial governors, military commanders, and sanitary commissioners. But real progress was slow. India was half a world away, and for all her enthusiasm, there was much about it that Nightingale never fully understood. And even she could not overcome the combined inertia of the India Office, the War Office, and the Government of India itself.

By the 1870s death had robbed her of her closest official contacts, and only then did she return to nursing. At the time of the Crimean War, a grateful nation had subscribed £45,000 to a Florence Nightingale Fund, and part of it had been used to establish a School of Nursing at St. Thomas's Hospital in London. In her declining years, she lavished much interfering attention on it, imperiously telling newly qualified nurses where to take employment, shamelessly promoting her protégés, and then feeling personally affronted if they dared to get married. But she was becoming increasingly isolated and out of touch. She had never accepted the germ theory of disease, nor placed much confidence in vaccination. She was opposed to the professionalization of nursing, to public examinations, and to state registration.

Still, as her memory and her eyesight began to fail, and as she outlived all her contemporaries, including Queen Victoria herself, she eventually became, as Benjamin Jowett described her, "a legend in her own lifetime." In 1907 she became the first woman to be admitted to the Order of Merit, and in the following year she became only the second woman to be granted the Freedom of the City of London. In 1870 she had breezily remarked that "I am so busy that I have no time to die." It was another forty years before the opportunity finally presented itself.

Such was her life—conveyed here in her own writings with a directness and an immediacy that outshine all subsequent biographical endeavors. But still the question remains: What are we to make of her? Even among her sternest critics, Nightingale's achievements have never been in serious doubt. It is over her motives and her methods that the most substantial reservations have been registered. And here, it cannot be said that this book helps us very much. The editors have labored mightily to elucidate their text. They have linked the letters with explanatory passages, they have provided exegetical footnotes and a chronological table, and they have succinctly summarized the contents and viewpoints of all the major biographies.

But none of this makes it any easier to evaluate or interpret her correspondence, let alone come to terms with the ambiguities and contradictions of Nightingale herself. As the editors freely admit, Nightingale wrote letters for many different purposes: to flatter, to bully, to persuade, to denounce. But from reading her words essentially in isolation, it is often not clear what her motives really were. And as F. B. Smith so cogently argued, many of her uncorroborated accounts of events in which she was involved simply cannot be trusted. So how can we know, just by looking at her letters, what to believe and what to disallow?

The reader cannot possibly answer these substantial and significant questions from the evidence provided (or not provided) here. Nor, it seems, can the editors. In the end, they settle for the same Janus-faced interpretation of Nightingale's conduct and temperament that has dominated Nightingale studies since Cooke first put it forward with such careful discretion in his official biography. On the one hand, they admit, Nightingale was calculating, ungenerous, vindictive, the self-dramatizing creator and jealous guardian of a misleading public image that was itself the key to much of her power. On the other, they also insist that she was a reformer of genius, endowed with what she herself once described as "a *must* in her life," from which humanity in general undeniably benefited. So here she is once again: still the unfathomable and familiar mixture of virgin and virago, saint and sinner, invalid and activist, crusader and conspirator, matron and monster, the heroine who was both much less, but also very much more, than the "Lady with the Lamp." And as long as studies of Nightingale persist in being so overwhelmed and so obsessed with her own towering personality, that is where interpretation and analysis are unpromisingly likely to remain.

The real challenge posed by Nightingale—as by most larger-than-life person-

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alities from the past—is that she can only be properly understood by placing her much more fully and perceptively in a broader historical context. One obvious approach would be to see her as belonging to that select coterie of nineteenth-century British civil servants subsequently labeled "zealots," or "statesmen [sic] in disguise." These were contemporaries such as Sir Edwin Chadwick, the public health campaigner, Sir Rowland Hill, the inventor of the penny postage, and Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, the educational crusader.

All of them (like Nightingale) were impassioned and ardent reformers, in a hurry to get things changed and get things done. All believed (like Nightingale) in the righteousness and the greatness of their cause. All were prepared (like Nightingale) to use underhand means to achieve admirable ends: bullying and traducing opponents, lobbying for public and parliamentary support, packing royal commissions and committees of inquiry with their own friends and supporters, and slanting the evidence to justify their own policies and recommendations. In the company of these messianic manipulators, Nightingale seems far less exceptional, in both her virtues and in her shortcomings, than she is habitually made to appear by her biographers.

Except, that is, in one particular way. To state the obvious, these mandarin zealots were all men. If anything provides the key to understanding Nightingale, it is surely this: that she was a woman who set out to crusade and to conquer in a man's world. She knew that to get things done in Victorian England, she had to work with men and through men. She loved public business, public life, public fame, regularly referred to herself in the masculine, and proudly admitted to being a "man of facts" and a "man of actions." And she regarded most members of her own sex with scarcely concealed scorn. They put private duty before public affairs; they neither relished power nor understood how to use it; and there was too much "cant about women's rights."

And yet Nightingale was not above exploiting her gender for her own advantage. Her national popularity at the time of the Crimean War derived from the fact that she was a woman doing good in what had previously been the all-male world of war and battle. It is impossible to imagine a correspondingly powerful legend developing about a *man* with a lamp. She exploited her illnesses and her physical weaknesses to enhance her moral authority and manipulative power, in precisely the same way that Queen Victoria used her widowhood. And she clearly accomplished more as a string-puller, an operator, and a bully because most Victorian men would have thought it unchivalrous to defy her or to call her bluff.

The essential difficulty in understanding Nightingale may thus be succinctly stated: she was (and is) too bossy, too interfering, too governessy for many men, and she was (and is) too uninterested in women's issues and women's rights to be embraced as a feminist role model. But to define the problem is also to suggest a solution. Thus described, she may most helpfully and appropriately be seen as the precursor and soulmate of another very extraordinary British woman: Margaret Thatcher.

Long before Thatcher, Nightingale both denied and exploited her femininity to gain power in a man's world. Long before Thatcher, Nightingale was possessed of superabundant energy, and was in a righteous rage to get things done. Long before Thatcher, Nightingale hated red tape, loathed bureaucrats, and was determined to sweep away incompetence and inefficiency wherever she found it. Long before Thatcher, Nightingale was congenitally incapable of understanding any point of view that differed from her own. And long before Thatcher, Nightingale took up men, used them for her own ends, and then cast them aside with little regret or remorse. In the age of the Iron Lady, Nightingale seems a much more credible female figure than she has been at any time since her death. In a very real sense, Thatcher's success is Nightingale's final vindication. And verification, too.

The Thatcher era is, then, a particularly propitious time for a full-scale re-evaluation of Nightingale's life and work. For she still awaits the biographer and the historian who can simultaneously do her justice and take her measure. But what a task he (or she) is going to have! To work through the elephantine mass of relevant archival material will require stamina of positively Florentian dimensions. To decode and interpret her letters correctly and convincingly will demand judgment and intuition of the very highest order. To convey the contradictions of her personality will need the insight of an artist and the expertise of a psychologist.

And to do full justice to the astonishing range of her interests and achievements will take a scholar of uncommon versatility and expertise, not just in political history, military history, and medical history, but also in women's history, imperial history, administrative history, intellectual history, and religious history. Eighty years after her passing, Nightingale remains a daunting and intimidating adversary. Until her biography is properly accomplished, these brilliant yet baffling letters provide the most vivid picture available of this eminent, abidingly enigmatic Victorian. In death, as in life, Nightingale herself remains emphatically in charge.

DAVID CANNADINE is the author of the forthcoming *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (Yale University Press).

The Genius of Sleep

Noise of the high blown wheat in fields of fire
And earnest sounds of birds around the edge:
Genius is the sleep of desire,
The sleep I yearn for,

As the long drive carries us deep
Into the lake of an inscrutable horizon.
Desire is the genius of sleep,
The genius of my fingertips, damp

For the touch of your hair, which only grazes
My hand the hundredth time I rest it on your seat.
Desire is the sleep of genius,
The sleep that razes,

That coats your tongue and cheek with salt. Admire,
Admire the bead of sweat that glides along the vinyl.
Sleep is the genius of desire,
The genius mirrored

In the windshield movies of the night; between us,
The revolving constellations of headlights.
Desire is the sleep of genius,
The belated movement

Of a clouded sky and the broad sweep
Of a distant turn signal, slower than your dreams.
Desire is the genius of sleep:
All periphery, it waits for you.

It is the monument you're driving to.

JENNIFER ASHTON

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Fever in the Morning

BY THOM GUNN

It Was Fever That Made The World by Jim Powell

(University of Chicago Press, 88 pp., $20, $8.95 paper)

It seems a lean time for poetry. The New Formalists and the Language Poets compete for our attention, but each group mirrors the other in the incompleteness of its ambitions. The first, complacency at its heart, has no interest in stylistic experiment, and the second scoffs at "subject," placing the term between quotation marks as if referring to some laughable affectation.

Jim Powell's remarkable first book is therefore all the more satisfying in that he avoids both such denials. He is, for one thing, unashamedly concerned with his subject matter, which not only sets him off in the first place but puts the pressure on him to experiment with structure, sentence length, and rhythms, in ways that serve to elucidate while rendering more complex.

The first line of his first poem is also the title of the book: "It was fever that made the world," a bold and questionable proposition, thus isolated, that excess is a natural function. Well, it is and it isn't, we may qualify, and in doing so we predict the way the book itself is to explore the implications of this opening. For, having presented it on its own, Powell now proceeds to limit it by the poem it leads into:

> It was fever that made the world
> burn last summer, that afternoon
> when I lay watching the sun pour
> its incurable folly slantwise
> into a plum tree's crest.
>
> infusing it till the whole crown glowed
> red as infected blood translucent
> in a syringe.

We are caught at once in the heart of contradictions, however they may be sanctioned by tradition. To call the sun's bounty "incurable folly" classes the heat of procreation with the impulse of the intravenous drug-taker. Powell pursues his imagery of hectic reds through the thirty-five lines of the poem, from blossom and infected blood to the flushed faces of dancers at a rock concert "thriving" on their fever, and finally to

> . . . taillights queueing at the tollbooths
> Friday night, then streaming up the bridge
> till all five lines of their sharp reds
> merge
> toward the city's bright towers.

Each image has been linked to the others by an illusion of sequence, the real sequence being in the poet's mind only, and, "merging," they culminate in this suggestion, which is somehow both to the point and beside it. What justifies the reckless joy of the verse movement's final unimpeded sweep? What connects the latent promise of the city's towers with either plum blossom or infected blood? Health and fever are to remain thus mysteriously compromised throughout Powell's book.

The complication and deepening of the central concept in this poem are performed chiefly by the amassing of instances. The sheer variety of what Powell is able to pack in is amazing. Each of his poems is like an enormous club sandwich, the tastes of its ingredients both complementing and rubbing off on one another. It appears that he has learned about sandwiches largely from Horace, two of whose odes he has translated in this volume. In them, the subject is changed about halfway through, making what appears an abrupt new start with the switch from the snowdrifts of a mountain to the summer play of lovers in the city, or from Cleopatra as Rome's sinister opponent, depraved and power-mad, to Cleopatra as clear-eyed heroine. Thus, as Charles Towan Beye says, "The initial stance is perverted, denied, or redefined by the end," and the self-adjusting structure of the poem constitutes a continuing lively example for experiment.

If you add to the second start a third and a fourth, and so on, as Powell does, you end with an inclusive poem indeed, one with room for many different kinds of health and sickness, learning and spontaneity, myth and reminiscence, particularly if your vehicle is the long complex sentence in which subordinate clauses offer ample opportunity for human contrariness to find a means of escape or of further self-entrapment. The final poem of the book consists of a single fifty-line sentence, and the sentence is in fact Powell's primary poetic unit, gathering up material as it goes along, both tentative and assured, in quest of its own end. Did he perhaps learn its potential from that so different poet Robert Duncan?

The same sentence, the same poem, may offer simultaneous accommodation to the ancient Mediterranean or to the Northern California of our own time: Virgil speaking about the nature of unborn souls is set beside an overgrown Oakland yard; the god Pan sodomizing a billy goat shares the expression of a lustful glance intercepted across the room at a party in Berkeley. The classical gods have fully entered Powell's mind, where they lead a wirily conceptual life. But the Bay Area defines the very conditions of his body; the poetry engages it in physical terms, those of a place that the poet has grown up in and lived through detail by detail—far from the familiar journalistic references to hot tubs, etc.

An outmoded gas furnace coming on with a soft explosion in some dark shingled house; "a stuccoed pond / in the half mission style, half moorish entry court / of a store in San Jose" selling lamps; a spot on the hills above Berkeley from which you can watch the lights around the Bay come on at nightfall, house by house, street by street, until they become "a general glow"; and a deer trail tracing its channel of dry, unmitigated heat "through the head-high bristle / of sage buckthorn and manzanita"—such references nourish the poetry with a dense particularity, so that place becomes more than simple background to experience, rather a determinant of it, like Hardy's Wessex or Baudelaire's Paris.

It is never more particularized than in "Revisiting the Haight," where specifics are both sharply themselves and at the same time suggestive of wider contexts without ever turning into mere impoverished emblems. Like most of the other poems, it is written in patterned stanzas made up of accentual lines that are run-over as a matter of course, even between stanzas, so that the form is both—in a curious way—elegantly courted and smoothly neglected. A stable pattern and its loss is also the subject explored by the interinvolved and rapidly changing imagery of the poem:

> That year, sea-fog in tufted hanks
> spun through the eucalyptus tops
> below our attic flat,
> thick coiling strands that looked as if
> they passed right through the
> limbs—intact—

There are at least four times in the

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speaker's life that are distinguished, four fresh Horatian starts. He is found walking by the house he used to live in, and recalls not only that time twelve years ago but also an earthquake of a month ago and the events of last night. Similarly disparate images are crowded into temporary closeness throughout the poem; pushed together by tremor or random wind, to which he is finally able to turn, seeking shelter not from but in randomness itself. For he and his lover of last night, unlike the sea-fog escaping the branches, continue to "tangle," meet and stay met, so that what may have been random conjunction becomes meaningful.

I would class this as one of the high achievements of the collection, with the opening poem, "Lighting the Furnace," "Song," "The Crooked House," "Between the Teeth," and "Circe." This last starts:

> All the new young men
> have come to crowd around her knees
> again
> and lean toward her lips,
> sitting bewitched at these feet their
> grandfathers
> once nuzzled with drugged snouts.

I find it difficult to overpraise the ease of this writing, which in one act combines succinct physical presentation and explanation of it. It is a charming conceit besides, that the original sailors of Odysseus should have given way to a generation of fans who come to sit at the feet of the aged enchantress. But we find at the end a delayed dedication, to Olga Rudge, the mistress of Ezra Pound, and rereading it we realize that the poem is about the witchcraft within sex and poetry: Circe/Olga and Odysseus/Ezra have been indeed a mutual pair, of whom she remains to tell "how he subdued her—as if, remembering, / she possessed him still."

Endeavor in poetry may be like endeavor in love: both entail the entrance into a fever in which health and ill-health are indistinguishable. (Pound's fascism and his greatest poetry have the same source; Circe's power as Muse is identical with her magic that turns men into pigs.) But only by passing through fever may the poem be written—the subduing of the enchantress by which she takes possession of you, and thus both of you are equal in a kind of entwined energy.

It is perhaps here that Jim Powell, not yet forty, most shows his superiority to many of his contemporaries and seniors. He not only understands the way in which opposites are necessary to one another, he achieves his knowledge in the poem, and so we grasp it as we read. In the meeting of opposites—whether of disease and health or of sea-fog and branches or of Circe and Odysseus—he has tapped a subject matter that is endless and important, and by the thoroughgoingness and the subtlety of his exploration shows he has the power to do almost anything.

THOM GUNN is the author of numerous books of poetry.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 4*

ment to raise money abroad for a foreign policy enterprise that was controlled and managed by representatives of the U.S. government and that was explicitly forbidden by American law. We disagree.

The congressmen's letter confirms that Representative Hyde in fact encouraged the administration to seek foreign funding in pursuit of a clandestine policy that would not be underwritten by the Congress as required by the Constitution. He and the others appear to have learned little from the Iranamok scandal.

Sex, bananas, and the arts

To the editors:

In "The NEA Belly Up" (June 18), Robert Brustein argues that the arts are "immensely important." He surely is right. But then he implies that the federal government should continue to subsidize the arts. Non sequitur. Sex too is immensely important, and so are bananas. No subsidy is suggested for the expenses connected with either. Why? I guess that importance per se is no reason for subsidy. Brustein may realize that bananas or sex, unlike, say, police protection, can be paid for by those who want them and ignored by those who don't. Why is art different? Why can't those who want to hear a concert, or see an exhibit of Mapplethorpe, pay for it themselves? Why should we, via taxes, force people to pay for what they don't want to pay for?

Those who don't want to pay for art will not benefit from what they are compelled to subsidize. The NEA is a pork barrel subsidy for middle-class art lovers.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York, New York

Rain forest crunch

To the editors:

Since Orna Feldman's "Rain Forest Chic" (June 25) was only about the thousandth time I've been subjected to free advertising for Ben & Jerry's, telling us that all concerned human beings have already supped at the B&J trough, I figured it was time to hie down to the friendly local radical capitalists for an authentic taste of jungle ice cream.

I must confess that in my eagerness for an ecological sweet I scarcely noticed that there were enough plastic, paper, and other disposables in the store to supply a good-sized McDonald's. Then I noticed that the cones are individually wrapped in a piece of paper that must be

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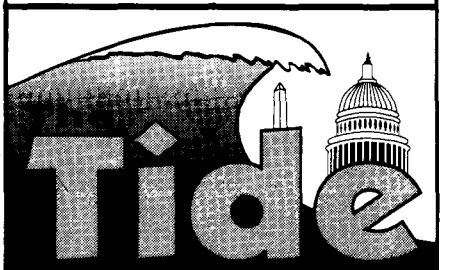

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Israel, the Arabs, & Human Rights (1)

We Americans are much concerned with human rights. Of late, much of this concern has been focused on the Middle East. Remarkably, however, virtually all of that concern seems to be directed towards Israel, and hardly any of it to the Arab states in bitter and perpetual conflict with Israel. Is Israel's human rights record really that bad? Is that of the Arabs really that good?

What are the facts?

■ The Western world compares Israel to the Western democracies and applies to Israel Western standards of behavior, especially in the area of human rights. Israel is, of course, a democracy, in which the liberties that we take for granted are equally available to all citizens—Jews and Arabs alike. Among the Arab countries, not a single one adheres to even minimal standards of human rights. While to us in the United States, the human rights performance of other countries is mostly a matter of abstraction, it is a daily reality for Israel. They have to live with it. Israel expects to and is expected to adhere to high principles. But the enemies surrounding it, virtually all of them (with the notable exception of Egypt) having Israel's destruction close to the top of their agendas, do not play "by the rules".

■ For instance, Israel is bitterly denounced and condemned for having deported a handful of Palestinians, who were convicted of crimes against public order. Compare that with the routine expulsion of people from the Arab nations. The Palestinians, who are residents of most countries of the Middle East, are particularly vulnerable to expulsion, for the most insignificant offenses, or simply because their presence is not deemed to be in the best interest of the host. Tiny Kuwait, for instance, deported over 27,000 (!) people in 1986, many Palestinians among them. In February of 1988, Kuwait expelled many more, in order to quell demonstrations supporting Palestinian rioters in the territories administered by Israel.

■ Much is made of the loss of life in Israel and in the administered territories since the beginning of the so-called "intifada". But, in view of how long this has been going on and considering the violence and the hatred on the part of the Arabs, it is remarkable how few people have died. The relatively small number of casualties is testimonial to the restraint of the Israeli military and the Israeli government. Who can doubt that the "intifada" could have been suppressed in a few days, had Israel followed the cruel norms of the area in which it is located. Some Arab states conduct wholesale massacres of political opponents as state policy. In 1982, for instance, Syrian president Hafez Assad ordered the killing of over 20,000 civilians in the city of Hama. Iraq routinely executes so many people for bizarre "offenses" (such as insulting the president) that Amnesty International has given up counting them. Iraq has also recently reached a new low in human rights abuse by killing more than 5,000 of its own Kurdish citizens by poison gas, because they were not thought to be politically reliable. The Democratic Republic of Yemen holds periodic mass executions. Even the so-called "moderates" among the Arab states know how to handle civil disobedience "efficiently". Saudi Arabia, where slaves are still being kept and where public amputations for small offenses are the norm, killed over 400 Muslim pilgrims in one bloody day in Mecca in 1987. Egyptian troops killed over 100 people during riots in 1986. In April of 1989, Algerian government troops opened fire in the city of Souk Ahras against Algerian citizens who were protesting food prices and corruption. The army didn't hesitate to machine-gun 350 people to death in less than an hour.

■ Much effort is expended in criticizing Israel's human rights record in its treatment of the Palestinians in the administered territories. In the climate of violence created by the intifada, during which hundreds of Palestinians have been killed by their fellow Arabs, the occasional act of violence by individual Israelis is perhaps to be expected. Every such violation is contrary to explicit laws and standing military orders and is investigated, prosecuted and punished. Compare that with the human rights violations and the ruthlessness of the Arab states against the Palestinians living in their midst. In 1970, during the "Black September" riots, Jordanian military killed 3,400 Palestinians in just 10 days. In 1976, the Syrian army killed over 23,000 Palestinians. In the three-year "war of the camps", the death toll of Palestinians reached over 3,000. At least that number of Palestinians is reported to languish in Syrian prisons.

Israel is a democratic country, with a freely elected government that is fully responsible to its citizens for its actions. It is the only such country in the entire Middle East. It shares with the Western democracies a fundamental commitment to human rights. Israeli society is totally open and accessible to the media of all countries. Individual human rights violations are promptly put under the microscope of public scrutiny. In contrast, virtually all Arab countries are ruled by self-appointed tyrants and are secretive and closed societies. Their massive and brutal human rights abuses go largely unreported. Journalists and T.V. reporters are allowed in these countries by invitation only. When there, they'd better know what to report and how to report it if they don't wish to be killed, kidnapped, or officially "tried" and executed, as recently happened in Iraq.

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CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 43*

discarded before one can eat the cone. So I passed on that and ordered a Ben & Jerry's ice cream pop. To my dismay, it was designed like a Russian *maryoshka* doll: a cardboard box inside of which was a paper wrapper inside of which was the ice cream. The purpose for this double packaging is evidently to make it a "premium product," which enabled Ben and Jerry to charge an extra buck. Good Humor, a reactionarily single-wrapped product, is half the price.

I don't doubt Ben and Jerry's sincerity (not completely, anyway), but someone ought to tell them that they're not going to get many Brazil nuts if they chop down all the trees.

THOMAS F. BERNER
New York, New York

In the wings

To the editors:

Like Stanislaw Baranczak, I marvel and delight in the fact that among the world's leaders today there are two playwrights ("All the President's Plays," July 23). He names two: the pope and the president of Czechoslovakia.

"Who's next?" he asks.

Arpad Goncz, president of Hungary.

JONATHON MARKS
San Francisco, California

TRB *continued from page 6*

process protect abortion rights, but this can be a great revival issue for liberals (just as *Roe* made abortion a great revival issue for conservatives).

Reverse discrimination. A no-no, needless to say. Conservatives are all for judicial activism when it means judges knocking down affirmative action plans. And yet Bush almost bragged of his intention to take ethnic criteria into account in appointing future Supreme Court justices. Go figger.

Strict constructionism. The third component of the great conservative judicial trinity, along with "judicial restraint" and "original intent." These values are not always compatible. For example, the First Amendment says, "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech." A strict construction of those words would lead to a broad, "activist" approach. Yet few self-proclaimed strict constructionists are First Amendment absolutists. Where does Judge Souter stand? The only way to find out is to ask.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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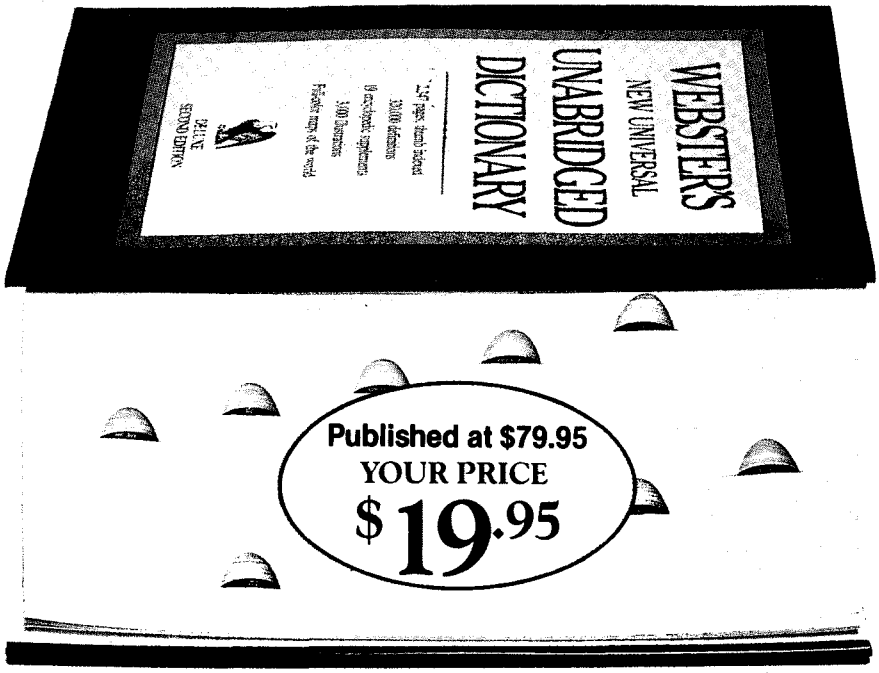

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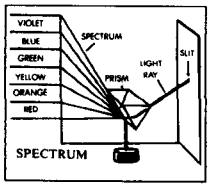

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MOSCOW DIARIST

Insomnia

AS THIS CITY ROUSES ITSELF from what was both the slumber and nightmare of communism, the only safe bet is that Moscow will be awake—if red-eyed—for years to come. The numbing boredom of what is now referred to as "the era of stagnation" has been replaced by dizzying change, but the stumbling, staggering patrons of the beer bar called Beer Bar (hard by the produce store named Produce and the café named Cafe) near my apartment off Gorky Street still prefer their dizziness the way they liked their numbness—in liquid form. Unlike most Americans, but like most Soviets, their fascination with Soviet political perestroika faded soon after they found that they could speak, write, protest, and vote all they wanted but still not change the material conditions of their lives.

ONE OF THE FEW PLACES WHERE politics is still considered interesting is at the Diplomatic Academy, the Soviet Foreign Ministry's midcareer institute. Eduard Shevardnadze's ministry proved that it is not guilty of "old thinking" by allowing an American teacher to penetrate its once-forbidden doors. The academy permitted me to bring my bourgeois mentality and twenty-five copies of THE NEW REPUBLIC to four classes a week. In addition to Soviets, Mongolians, and Vietnamese, there are diplomats at the academy from what were hereabouts known last September as the socialist countries, in November as the so-called socialist countries, in January as Eastern Europe, and today as Central Europe. With TNR as their course text, these diplomats, veterans of the anachronistic Kabul-Havana-Pyongyang-New York corridor, became familiar with terms like "zinger," "Bushspeak," and "Gorbo," daring new concepts like the Dan Quayle doormat, and provocative questions like "Who brought the Commies to their knees?" (see Washington Diarist, February 19)—a query I managed to pose with a straight face. These once professionally opinionless diplomats now spout opinions with a vengeance. During one class I was explaining the lyrics to "Blowin' in the Wind." When we came across the verse—

How many years can some people exist
Before they're allowed to be free?

—one Soviet diplomat, unsolicited, answered, "Seventy-two."

HOW DO THESE PARTICULAR COMmies answer the question of who brought them to their knees? They reject the idea that it was either the Reagan Revolutionaries or the Détente Democrats. As one diplomat told me, "We did it to ourselves. If our aim in the cold war was to prove our system could provide better for its citizens, we failed completely." The question, they say, should be restated as, "What won Europe?" Their answer: freedom, and hopes of a better life. Although most of my diplomatic students thought Lithuania's declaration of independence was premature, they also thought it was justified—and they're surprised that the U.S. government, which still has the reputation among Muscovites of being the defender of freedom, was so timid about it. It's one thing for the Soviet government to drop its cold war rhetoric, but why should the Americans do the same? Several of my Soviet diplomatic students told me Reagan was right when he called this an evil empire. Most of them, by the way, are looking forward to following their Czechoslovak colleagues and turning in their Party cards, without losing their jobs.

THE ONLY THING UNRAVELING more quickly than the Party's legitimacy is the clothes on Moscow's poster models. A year ago, revealing bathing suits appeared on the calendars sold outside every Metro stop. By the time the snow melted this spring, though, the bathing suits were mostly gone. Alongside reproductions of paintings of the Russian Orthodox saints and portraits of the Romanov dynasty you could find a nude, handcuffed Samantha Fox as well as nameless other women in nameless other positions. What's striking is the speed, rather than the explicitness, with which these women have disrobed. Last year I had the chance to see the USSR's first striptease. That event, performed in a remote "Tram Repairing Station's House of Culture," was publicized through whispered word of mouth. Under the dusty gaze of a bust of Lenin and a fading propaganda banner that read, "Glory to the Great Soviet People—Builders of Communism, Dedicated Campaigners for Peace in the World!" young women squirmed all over the stage in various stages of undress. Less than twelve months later, almost every state-owned restaurant features a "show" where women run around in G-strings.

THE DECLINE OF PURITANISM IS one of the more benign examples of how the relaxation of state control has led to the exponential growth of evils that weren't supposed to exist during the stagnation years. A detective in Tashkent told me that the homicide rate of his city has grown to forty killings a month, up 350 percent from last year. And if you think that's murder, consider this: a new Volvo station wagon there now sells for 700,000 rubles—about 300 years' salary for an average Soviet office worker, and *8,300* years' salary for an army draftee. "Economic perestroika" is little more than a contradiction in terms—it assumes there's something to restructure. But you don't have to be Adam Smith to see that things are pretty much beyond repair when, for example, people who rent their apartments from the state for ten rubles a month can turn around and sublet them for a thousand—a cool 10,000 percent markup.

THE SOVIET UNION RELIED ON fear to maintain discipline and order for so long that the people forgot how to maintain it themselves. Like the trick of pulling out a tablecloth from under a dinner setting, when the Communist state was removed in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany the society was still standing, albeit with some spilled salt. But in the USSR, where all civic life is attached to the state, everything is going to end up on the floor. The last place I saw order dissolve so quickly was in Beijing, where, a year before the protests started, many of the same things were spreading—superstition, street fights, beggars, corruption, inflation. Chinese students responded by rising up. Soviet students, by contrast, are almost shockingly apathetic. At political demonstrations I've attended in Moscow, the majority of the participants were over forty. Maybe Soviet young people are so pessimistic because they have come to realize that they were systematically lied to by their parents, teachers, and government. Whatever the reason, there's no mistaking their cynical passivity. Their unofficial slogan is "*Shto dyelet?*" This happens to be the title of one of Lenin's most famous books, usually translated as *What Is To Be Done?* When today's Soviet youth use the phrase, however, it's more like, "What can you do?"—said with a shrug of the shoulders and an expression of helplessness. During my weekly ninety-minute wait in the Pushkin Square McDonald's line, dozens of young Soviets would watch as my friends and I tried to stop the almost constant flow of young men cutting to the front of the line. When I asked a woman behind us why she was letting people cut in front of her, she explained, "We've got a slave mentality in this country. *Shto dyelet?*"

SETH GOLDMAN

Seth Goldman is a writer who has just spent a year teaching English in Moscow.

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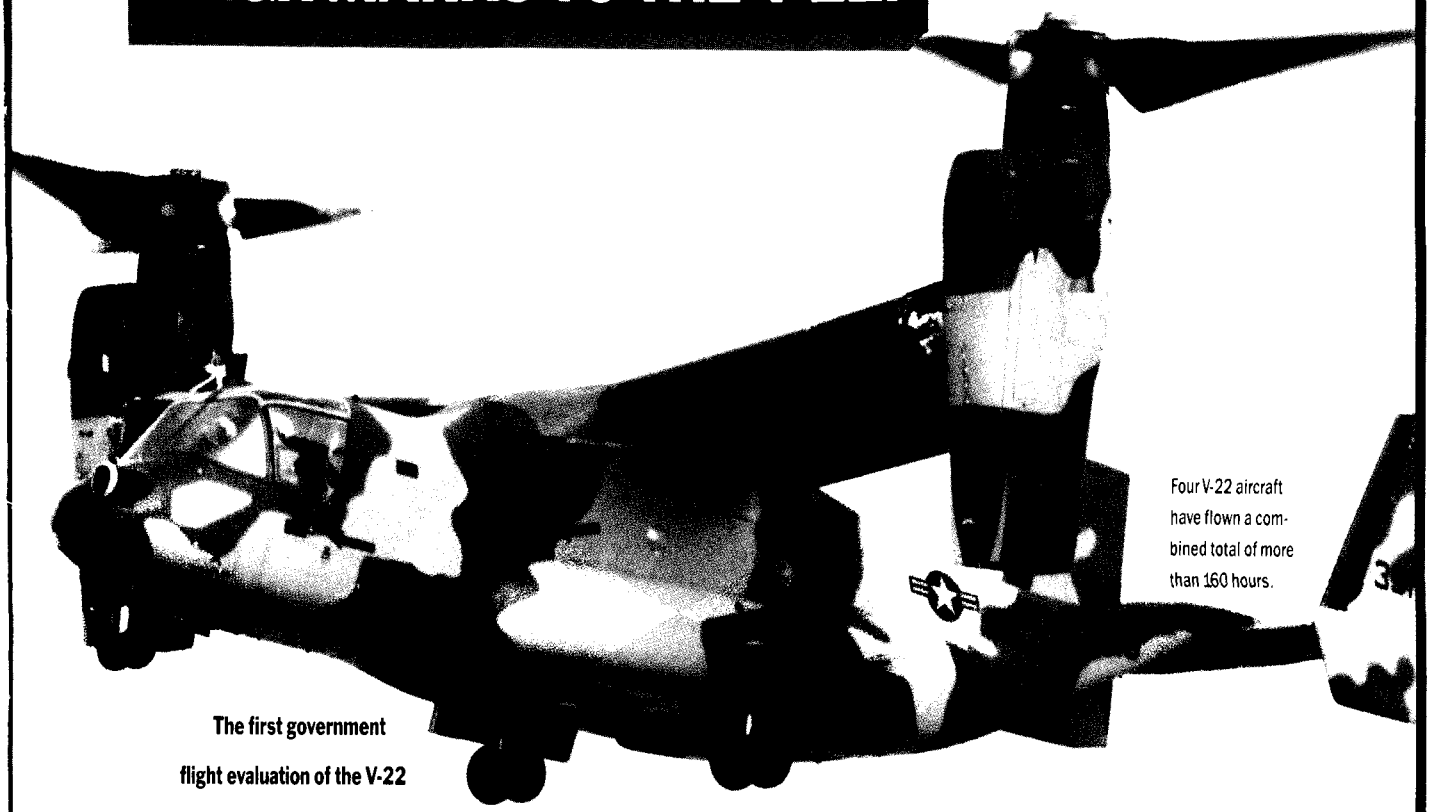

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